

news

significant shorts

MoD under pressure over plastic explosives blast

The Ministry of Defence came under pressure yesterday to make an immediate check of its stocks following the discovery by police of a quantity of plastic explosives used by the armed services at a house in Brecon.

The find was made during an investigation into the cause of a blast at a house in the mid-Wales town on Monday night in which a man died and another was seriously injured.

A number of box sticks of PE4 explosives were later recovered from the home of the injured man, a mile from the scene of the blast which police said was caused by 1lb of material.

Richard Livesey, MP for Brecon and Radnorshire, said: "I am contacting the MoD demanding that it checks all procedures for the storage of explosives and the way it accounts for the use of these materials. A MoD spokesman said: "We will help the police in any way we can."

Tony Heath

Spat over devolution moratorium

A spat broke out yesterday between campaigners on Welsh devolution as the "No" lobby accused their opponents of breaking a mutually-agreed moratorium on political activity.

The "Just Say No" campaign issued a press release to attack the "Yes for Wales" group after apparently being asked by a Labour association to attend a meeting.

A spokesman for the "No" group said it had been told the meeting at Greenfield would go ahead with a speaker from the "Yes" campaign alone if the group did not send anyone.

"We will continue throughout the whole of the week to refuse to participate in any form of campaigning whatsoever. To do otherwise would be to disrespect the wish of the whole nation at this incredibly sad time," he said.

Darren Hill, organiser of "Yes for Wales", responded by saying that to comment on the allegations would be distasteful at a time when campaigning was supposed to have stopped.

Fran Abrams

Adams 'prepared to compromise'



The leader of Sinn Fein, Gerry Adams, said yesterday that the party was prepared for compromise in the all-party talks on Northern Ireland that open next week and appealed to the Unionists not to act on their boycott threat.

Mr Adams, along with Sinn Fein's chief negotiator to the talks, Martin McGuinness, and Sinn Fein's single Eire MP, Caoimhghin O'Caolain, was in Washington at the start of a four-day US visit designed to

sell the party's participation in the talks to republican sympathisers in the United States and to the American public.

He said he was concerned to differentiate between the party's demands for an end to "British jurisdiction" in Ulster and the presence of Unionists in Eire. "We do not want them to leave. Unionists have as much right to be there as we do."

Mary Dejevsky

C4 poach 'Panorama' editor

Channel 4 has poached the editor of Panorama, Steve Hewlett, to be its new head of documentaries and features under new chief executive Michael Jackson. Mr Hewlett was in charge of Panorama when it took on a more populist touch. This included securing the famous interview with the Princess of Wales.

Fresh threat as BA talks break down

Travellers face the threat of further industrial action at British Airways after it became clear yesterday that talks had reached an impasse. Officials of the Transport & General Workers Union were understood to be resisting calls for more strikes from leaders of 9,000 cabin crew and hoped for fresh negotiations.

Union leaders tabled proposals for saving £42m, but it was not clear whether management were prepared to accept the plan. Both sides say officially that talks are continuing, but employees' representatives say that the negotiations have reached a stalemate. If there is no settlement union officials may call a fresh ballot among the cabin crew who came out on a three-day strike earlier this summer.

Barrie Clement

Texaco faces court over oil leak

The United States oil giant Texaco was last night facing the prospect of criminal proceedings after admitting it was responsible for the worst leak from a British oil production rig in nine years.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said it had asked the Procurator Fiscal to consider taking legal action against Texaco for the oil spill from its North Sea Captain rig 90 miles northeast of Aberdeen. "We have completed our investigation into the spill and a report has been sent to the Procurator Fiscal's office today," a DTI official said.

Texaco said in a statement that the leak on 25 August was four times larger than first estimated. Though dwarfed by accidents in Britain, such as the 71,800-ton Sea Empress spill, by recent standards among oil producers the Texaco leak was very large.

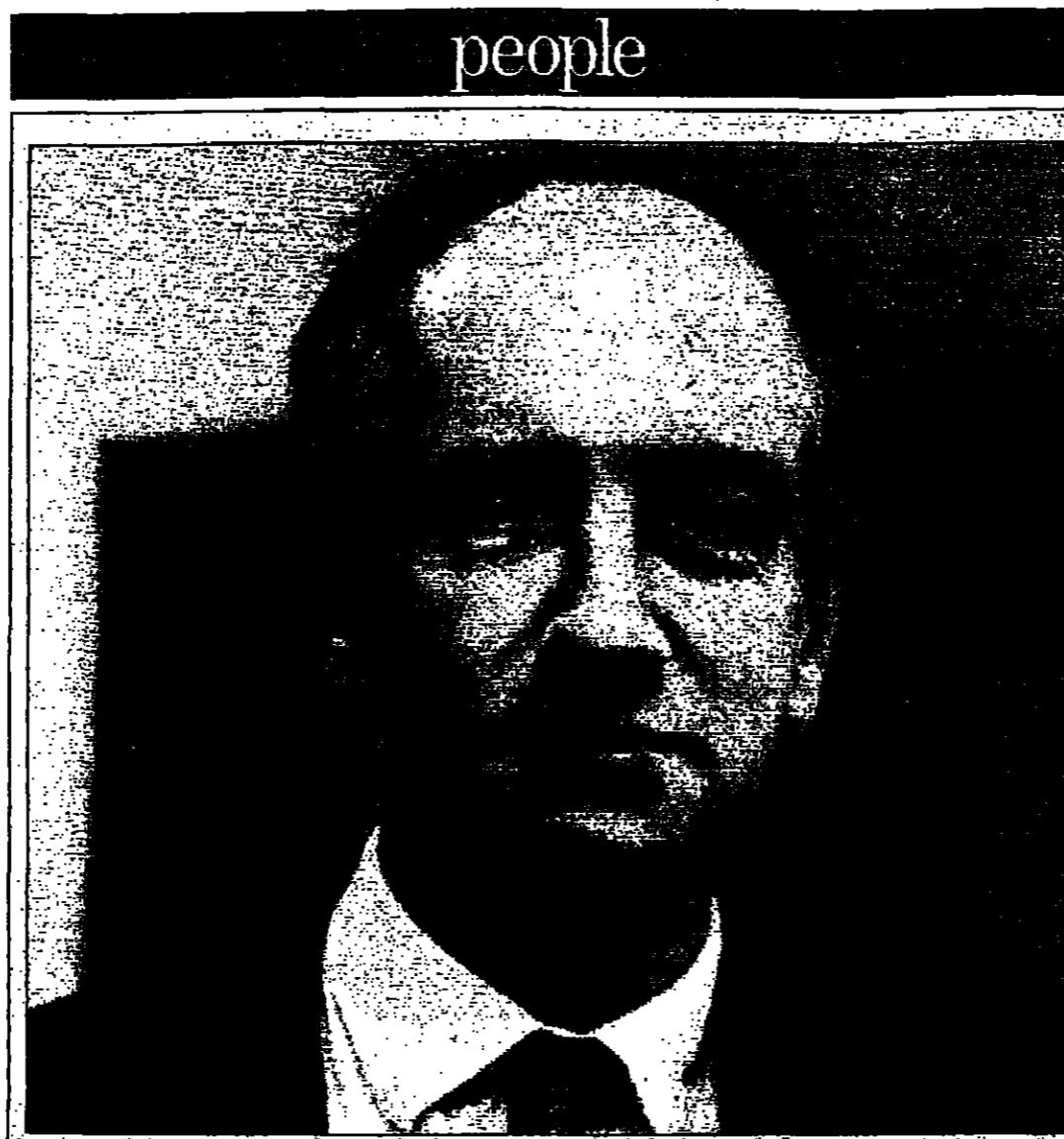
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BACK ISSUES

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Tim Smith: Criticised for lack of candour of affair

Cash-for-questions MP faces expulsion from accountancy

Tim Smith, the accountant and former minister who was forced to stand down as a Tory candidate just before the election over the cash-for-questions scandal, faces expulsion from the accountancy profession.

Mr Smith, who was strongly criticised by Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards in his report on the scandal, is being charged by the Institute of Chartered Accountants with bringing the profession into disrepute. The decision to proceed follows an investigation by the ICA started in the wake of the publication of Sir Gordon's report in July and completed on Tuesday.

According to a report in *Accountancy Age*, Mr Smith faces a tribunal in the autumn in which he could be expelled from the ICA, which would effectively end his career as an accountant.

While Neil Hamilton, the other main protagonist in the cash for questions affair, continues to deny having received cash for questions, there is no such doubt with Mr Smith. He admitted having received payments in cash from Mohamed al-Fayed, the owner of Harrods, in return for lobbying services but there is con-

siderable confusion about the precise amount, which Mr Smith has said could have been as much as £25,000.

Sir Gordon was critical not only of Mr Smith's "lack of candour" over the affair but also about the fact that Mr Smith, as an accountant, "should have [been] expected to have more accurate records".

Sir Gordon also raises an Establishment eyebrow at the fact that Mr Smith "appeared quite unconcerned about the implications of receiving money, purportedly on behalf of a company, in the form of cash payments directly from one of its clients".

Mr Smith only escaped suspension as an MP because he had left Parliament by the time the report was published.

Following Sir Gordon's report, the Commons standards and privileges committee said had Mr Smith been a member, "we would recommend a substantial period of suspension from the service of the House".

Mr Smith only accepted an amendment for his suspension, however, and parts of the evidence given to Sir Gordon were leaked. Mr Smith said last night: "I can't comment" and declined to say whether he was still working as an accountant.

Christian Wolmar

Crash-death girl gives life to five others

A 13-year-old girl who was killed in a car accident has helped five others to live by donating her organs.

Jacki Franklin-List believed she was too young to carry a donor card but had made it clear to her parents that she wanted her organs used if anything happened to her. She gave three babies, an eight-year-old child and a grandaughter the chance of a new life.

Jacki was knocked down by a car last April while cycling with her brother near her home in Surrey. She was taken to Atkinson Morley Hospital in Wimbledon, where she was put on a life-support machine but died next day.

One kidney was given to a 60-year-old man, her liver was divided between an eight-month-old baby and an eight-year-old girl and two other babies, one four days old and one 18 months old, received heart valves. All are now doing well, according to Jacki's stepmother, Ray List.

He said: "We told the doctors we wanted her organs donated



before they asked us. Now five others have benefited and we feel it wasn't a complete waste of a life. To start with it didn't help a great deal. We were both so upset. But now time has passed it certainly has helped - especially when you think of the three young babies who are just starting life."

The UK Transplant Support Service Authority in Bristol said there was no upper or lower age limit for carrying a donor card.

Jeremy Laurance

Beauties flee beast of a place

Miss England and Miss Wales were among 10 Miss Europe contestants to flee the Ukraine yesterday days before the final competition, apparently disgusted with living conditions in the former Soviet republic.

"Ten have left," said one organiser. There were 43 women due to compete for the title on Saturday.

A spokesman for the British Embassy in Ukraine's capital city said Miss Wales, Kathy Ann Peyton and Miss England, Emma Scott, left yesterday afternoon.

The young women had complained previously of being served stale bread and of not having their sheets changed for a week at their residence, a former resort of Communist Party bosses located in a forest outside of Kiev.

Local media reported that Miss Wales and Miss England had been forced into a local night club where they were "treated like prostitutes".

Organisers did not confirm whether any incident took place, but one said two of the young women wanted to be in England for the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales.

Kiev - Reuter

briefing

SOCIETY

Britain leads world in computer ownership

Britain may lag behind its competitors in sport and maths but it leads the world in one field - computer ownership.

According to a survey published today, Britain comes top out of 17 countries for the proportion of schools with computers.

It also tops the table, along with Belgium, for the highest proportion of home computers. One in three homes now has a computer compared, for instance, with the United States where the figure is 28 per cent.

One in five computer-owning households is connected to the Internet, says the survey commissioned by Olivetti Personal Computers which covered 14 European countries, the United States, Canada and Japan.

A survey of 2,000 British children, which formed part of the study, found that there has been a big increase in computer ownership in households with children. About two-thirds of these use a computer compared with 43 per cent two years ago.

In almost one in five households with children there are at least two computers.

Britain is the only country with at least one computer in every primary school. In Japan the figure is 70 per cent and in Germany less than 10 per cent.

In secondary schools there are twice as many computers for every 100 students as in Germany. Britain is even further ahead of Japan, France and Italy.

Judith Judd

WILDLIFE

Gulls lure birds to high-rise death

Seagulls in Toronto have learned to lure migrating birds to their deaths by guiding them into skyscrapers, claim researchers.

Like the Cornish wreckers who used to lure ships onto rocks for their cargoes, the gulls do their prey into crashing into high glass buildings, which stuns them. The birds then fall to street level, which can kill them, and the gulls eat the remains.

The extraordinary phenomenon, reported today in *New Scientist* magazine, has been seen in Toronto home of the world's tallest structure, the CN Tower.

While city birds learn to avoid bright lights and reflective glass, thousands of migrating birds die after crashing into the skyscrapers. The exhausted birds are first attracted to the bright lights and then get trapped in the maze of buildings. Usually "some collide with the glass, some drop from exhaustion," said Michael Mesure, of Toronto's Fatal Light Awareness Programme (FLAP), a voluntary group dedicated to rescuing stunned birds.



The gulls started off scavenging dead birds that had been accidentally killed. But, said Mesure, "as more gulls competed for food, some learned to drive birds into collisions". Charles Arthur

INCOME

Blair area a poverty-free zone

No employees in Islington North, the constituency where Tony Blair used to live, earn less than the likely level of the national minimum wage according to an analysis of the annual survey of earnings by the Office for National Statistics. It will come as a surprise to anybody familiar with Islington's pockets of poverty, but along with Bedfayre and Fulham, the survey showed nobody who worked there earning below £4 an hour.

By contrast, the parliamentary constituency with the highest proportion earning below £4 an hour was St Ives, with 31.3 per cent below that level.

The introduction of a national minimum wage will help a higher proportion of employees in Wales than any other region. An article in the ONS's monthly *Labour Market Trends* shows that 9.5 per cent of Welsh employees earn less than £3.50 an hour, compared to only 3.2 per cent in London and 6.3 per cent in the South-east.

ENVIRONMENT

Antarctic sea ice 'shrinking'

Whaling records suggest that the floating sea ice surrounding the Antarctic shrank by a quarter between the mid 1950s and the early 1970s, says an Australian scientist writing in *Nature*.

During those two decades the edge of the ice retreated southwards by nearly 3 degrees of latitude - or hundreds of miles. William de la Mare bases his finding on an analysis of the whale catching records dating from 1931 to 1987 and kept by fleets from several nations. It is thought to be more likely to be a natural phenomenon rather than an early sign of man-made climate change.

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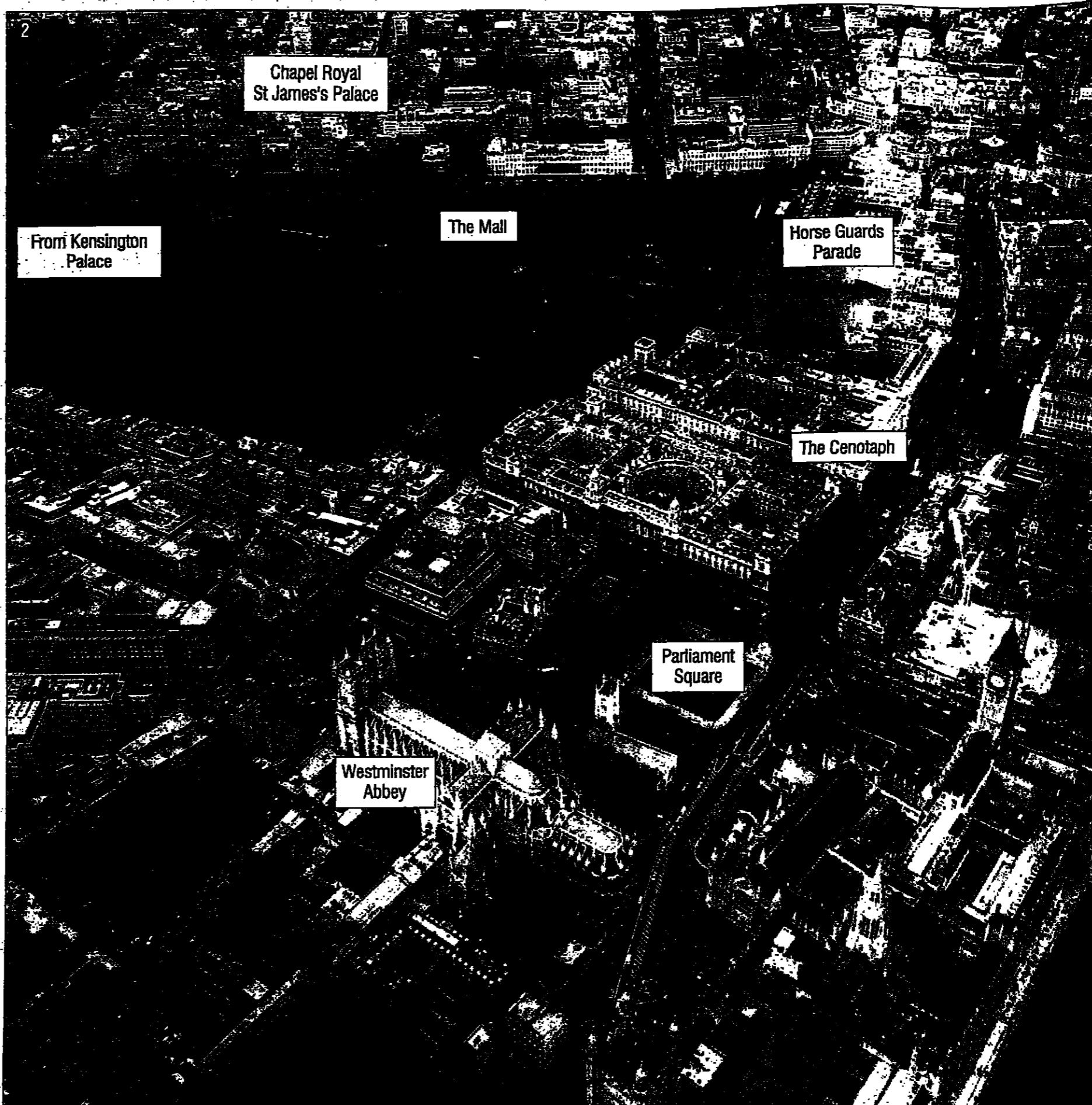
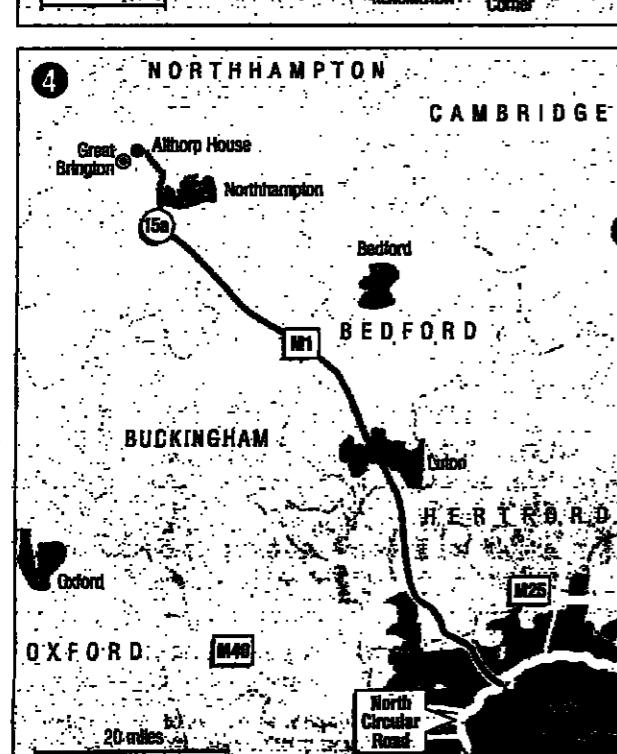
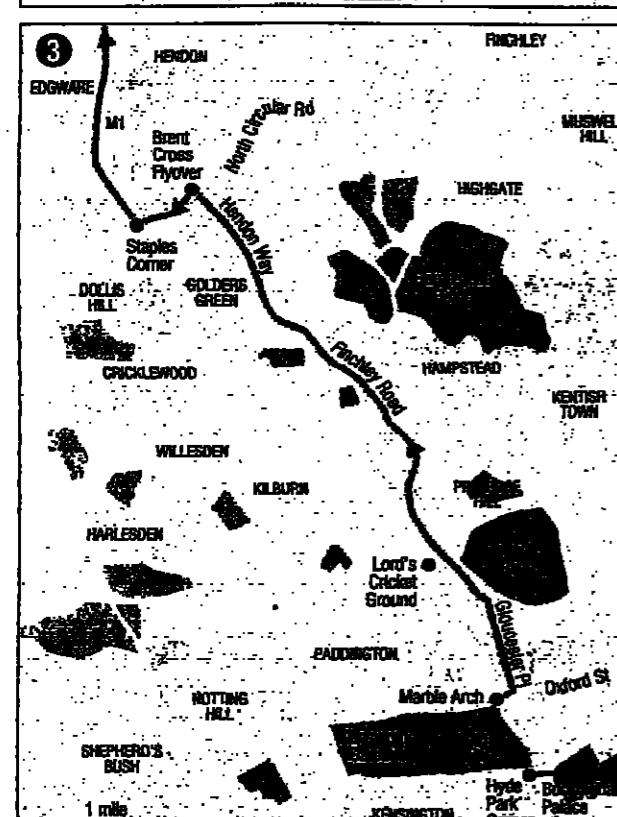
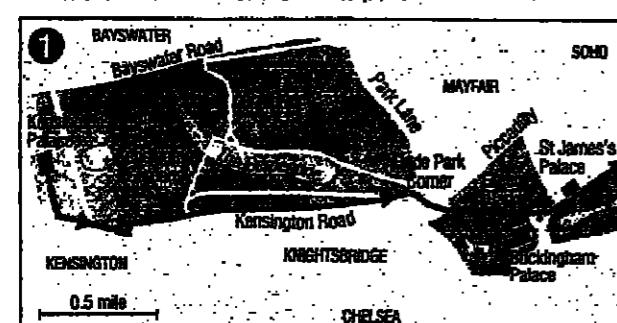
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JOHN LEWIS



Palace doubles length of funeral procession route

Michael Streeter

For the second day running, Buckingham Palace yielded to the public clamour to say farewell to Diana, Princess of Wales by dramatically extending the length of her funeral procession.

Just 24 hours after ruling out any lengthening—but agreeing to “narrow”—the procession to give more people access—officials said that her body would be taken to Kensington Palace from St James’s Palace tomorrow evening before the cortège started its journey on Saturday.

This will more than double the length of the route to accommodate estimates of up to 2 million people converging on central London on Saturday. Transport officials are meeting today to make arrangements to cope with what are expected to be the biggest crowds ever to converge on the capital.

The coffin will leave Kensington Palace at around 10am, carried on a gun carriage by riders of the King’s Troop and escorted by mounted police. It will join the rest of the procession at The Mall as originally planned at 10.25am.

The new route passes down Palace Avenue, on to Kensington High Street and Queen’s Gate, past the Albert Memorial and along Carriage Road in Hyde Park. It will then pass Apsley House and under Wellington Arch to Constitution Hill and The Mall.

A Palace spokesman said they had not bowed to pressure. “We’ve always tried to consider a way of lengthening the route in such a way that more people would be able to see the procession in safety,” he said. He said that using Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park was a “safe and secure way” of ensuring that.

Earlier the palace announced that two giant television screens would be mounted in Hyde

Park—awakening memories of past events there attended by the Princess—to allow more than 100,000 people to get a view of the proceedings. The service will also be transmitted to the crowds outside Westminster Abbey by loudspeaker.

After the service and one-minute silence, the Princess of Wales’s coffin will be driven at stately pace through central London, through the north of the city and along the M1 to

North Place. It will turn towards Lord’s cricket ground, along Park Road to Wellington Road, then north along Finchley Road.

From Hendon Way the cortège will pass over the Brent Cross flyover and take the North Circular Road to Staples Corner to the start of the M1 at junction 1. It will go up the motorway at around 40mph and leave it at junction 15A near Wootton in Northamptonshire. On the motorway it will be followed by a

extra train will be laid on to bring people in to London, and traffic organizations yesterday urged mourners to leave their cars at home and use public transport. Richard Freeman, spokesman for the Automobile Association, said: “Don’t even think about bringing cars into the capital. To my knowledge, they are not laying on access to extra parking or lifting parking restrictions. There could never be enough parking available for the amount of visitors expected. We’re advising people to park outside; use public transport and leave plenty of time.”

But there is concern that the capital’s infrastructure will be unable to cope with the scale of visitors. A London transport spokeswoman warned: “There will be massive congestion on the Underground. We would advise people to walk from Waterloo to wherever they are going to watch the procession from.”

Yesterday, speaking at a press conference in Great Brington, where the Princess’s coffin will be laid to rest in the Spencer family mausoleum in the church of St Mary the Virgin, Assistant Chief Constable Frank Whiteley, of the Royal Household, said: “The estimated 2 million-strong crowd is eclipsed by the 10 million people, 20 per cent of Iran’s population, who gathered for the funeral of the country’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in 1989.”



St Mary the Virgin at Great Brington. Photograph: Reuters

“We’ve tried to lengthen the route so more people could watch in safety”

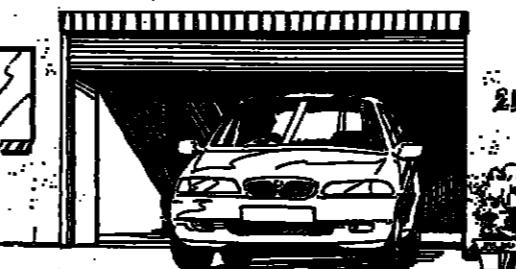
Buckingham Palace spokesman

Northamptonshire. The route taken by the hearse, followed by members of the Royal Family and the Spencer family, will be from the Abbey to Constitution Hill, as it came from St James’s Palace.

It will continue to Apsley Way and Wellington Arch, Hyde Park Corner, Park Lane, Cumberland Gate, Tyburn Way, Marble Arch, Oxford Street and Portman Street to Gloucester

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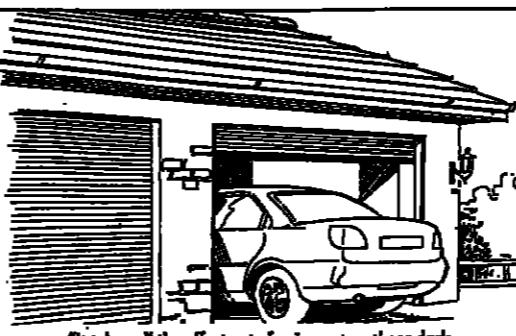
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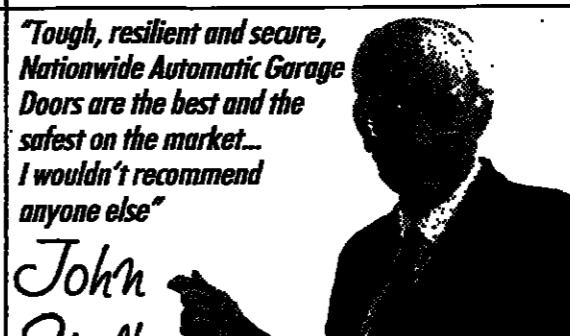
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Diana 1961-1997

the inquiry

Driver had no limo licence, says colleague

John Lichfield

Paris

Henri Paul, the man who drove the car in which the Princess of Wales died, lied about his military record and was not licensed to drive a large, armoured limousine, it was alleged yesterday.

The French military, after checking his records, said Mr Paul, 41, had never been an air force captain, as his employer, the Ritz Hotel, claimed. Nor had he finished his military service as head of security at an airbase in Rochefort, on the Bay of Biscay, in 1986.

According to the military press office, he served at Rochefort as an officer cadet, during his national service in 1979. He was later in the military reserve, where he learned to fly, but never rose above the rank of reserve lieutenant. He left the reserve in 1992.

The earlier account of Mr Paul's military career was given by the Ritz in good faith, presumably based on the information he had given them.

Another chauffeur employed

by the Ritz, speaking anonymously to French radio and television, alleged yesterday that Mr Paul did not have the special police licence required to drive the armoured Mercedes S280, which crashed into the pillar of an underpass in the early hours of Sunday morning. The *Préfecture de Police* confirmed that a special licence was needed. To obtain one, a driver had to pass a medical test and prove he was of "good morality". The police source would not comment on whether Mr Paul had the licence.

A spokesman for the Fayed family, owners of the Ritz Hotel, insisted yesterday that the allegation was "totally unfounded". Michael Cole said the vehicle had been leased from an agency in Paris and Mr Paul needed no special qualifications to drive it. Asked to comment on the exaggeration of Mr Paul's military record, Mr Cole said the French army was "splitting hairs".

He said the Fayed family wanted further investigation of the two official police tests, which showed that Mr Paul

was driving with three to four times the legal level of alcohol in his blood. "Alcohol from the shattered radiator was thrown over all the people who were in that car. They were all covered in alcohol," Mr Cole said. "We are not satisfied that the alcohol tests were conducted in the correct manner."

The anonymous Ritz chauffeur, in his interview with France 2 and Europe 1, said "everyone" at the hotel knew that Mr Paul had been drinking on Saturday night. He had been sent home, on call if necessary, and "everyone knew that he boozed when he wasn't working".

At Dodi Fayed's request, Mr Paul was recalled to the hotel late in the evening after the regular chauffeur had been sent out in a decoy car to draw off the photographers outside. "At the Ritz, when the Fayed's are there, it's panic stations," the chauffeur said. "Whatever they ask for, people never say 'no'." He described Mr Paul as a "bit too sure of himself ... a man who wanted to do too much".

Another chauffeur employed



Paris mourns: A couple pay homage to Diana at memorial set up near the Alma bridge

Photograph: AP

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Photo agency boss admits transmitting crash pictures

Louise Jury

Photographers who snapped the scene of the accident which killed Diana, Princess of Wales and then fled are expected to give themselves up to police for questioning, their agency said yesterday.

As the police inquiry began to home in on the paparazzi who escaped, Laurent Sola, a 37-year-old photographer who runs a Paris picture agency, said he thought that the freelancers who took the photographs to him to sell would co-operate.

Admitting for the first time that he had received and transmitted pictures taken after Sunday morning's crash, Mr Sola said he had now handed all negatives over to the police.

"I had some pictures but I no longer have them. I gave the pictures to the French police. I can't speak in [the photographers'] place. But I think they will speak to the French police," Mr Sola said.

"They had the reflex reaction of 99 per cent of photographers to do their job. They took the photos and left."

Since then, they have been in a state of shock.

Mr Sola would not name those involved nor reveal how many there were. He said he did not know whether other agencies also had photographs.

But it is understood that police want to speak to two men who escaped by motorcycle to sell their rolls of film.

In some pictures circulating to newspapers and magazines the fatally injured princess is reported to be staring straight into the camera.

Mr Sola added that he was still receiving "dozens and dozens" of telephone calls from the media around the world asking to see the photographs and offering hundreds of thousands of pounds.

But like the Big Pictures agency which received the photographs in London shortly after the accident and before Diana was pronounced officially dead, he said he decided not to deal with them as soon as the gravity of the situation became clear.

On Tuesday, Herve Stephan, the examining magistrate appointed to head the inquiry, placed six photographers and a motorcycle under investigation for manslaughter, recklessly causing bodily harm and failing to help victim of an accident, the "Good Samaritan" law.

But Mr Stephan made clear that the inquiry would cover all those who may have played a part in the pursuit, crash and subsequent events.

William Bourdon, the lawyer representing Nicolas Arsov, one of the seven charged, said the examining magistrate had a duty to pursue his inquiries. But

he said he believed that when the inquiry was complete "I guess it will appear to him that there is no objective basis for these charges".

There has been widespread revulsion that photographers continued to take pictures while the fatally injured Princess was unconscious and her companion Dodi Fayed, son of Harrods owner Mohamed Al Fayed, lay dead. But Mr Bourdon said none of the photographers was a professional medic capable of helping the seriously injured. "What could they do?" he asked, and he repeated his belief that the paparazzi were being made scapegoats.

As details of the unpublished 350-page police report continued to leak, it emerged that witnesses have told investigators



Mohamed Al Fayed: Civil action against photographers

They had the reflex action to do their job. They took the photos and left

Laurent Sola

that Romuald Rat, a photographer with the Gamma agency, moved the Princess's body as if to get a better shot.

But Philippe Benamou, for Mr Rat, said his client was checking Diana's pulse. And in a statement, Gamma said they were confident he would be exonerated and that his conduct was "humane and professional".

Lawyers have been advising the paparazzi themselves to say little about the case. Mohammed Al Fayed is bringing a civil action against the photographers alongside the criminal proceedings, as is the family of the chauffeur, Henri Paul, who also died.

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Guest
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Michael Streeter

As the world's media descended on Paris to cover the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales, the paparazzi were still hunting for pictures of the accident scene. The following day, the examining magistrate in Paris, Hervé Stephan, appointed to lead the inquiry into the crash, placed six photographers and a motorcycle under investigation for manslaughter, recklessly causing bodily harm and failing to help victim of an accident, the "Good Samaritan" law. But Mr Stephan made clear that the inquiry would cover all those who may have played a part in the pursuit, crash and subsequent events. William Bourdon, the lawyer representing Nicolas Arsov, one of the seven charged, said the examining magistrate had a duty to pursue his inquiries. But

the aftermath

Diana 1961-1997

Charles and Camilla forced apart



The Prince of Wales: May be booed and hissed at funeral

Kathy Marks

Prince Charles once spoke of the "soul refreshing" quality of the hills and pine forests around Balmoral Castle. It is to be hoped that he has found some solace this week in the rugged Highland scenery of the Royal estate.

Tomorrow, he must emerge from the seclusion of Balmoral and guide his sons through the ordeal of Diana's funeral. It will be the most difficult day of their lives, and possibly of his too. For so strong is national sentiment towards his ex-wife that it must be possible that the Prince will be booed or hissed by the crowds lining the route of the procession.

As he steels himself for the funeral, Prince Charles must be reflecting on the cruellest hand yet dealt him by Fate. Diana's new relationship with Dodi Fayed had snatched his chances of softening public attitudes towards Camilla Parker-Bowles, the woman he has loved for more than two decades.

Now everything has changed. Prince Charles's priority, now and for many years to come, must be William and Harry. As their only parent, he will need to devote more time to them and fill the void left by their mother's death.

As he tries to console the boys in these early days, one can only speculate on his own

confused emotions. A huge sense of loss, no doubt, for friends say that despite the bitter circumstances in which he parted from Diana, a strong

Amid his anguish, the Prince is deprived of the company of Camilla, the woman on whom he relies for emotional support. He has spoken to her by

being together have been virtually dashed.

The campaign waged by the couple's friends to rehabilitate Camilla as an acceptable companion, even future wife, for Prince Charles has been abandoned. A party next week in aid of the National Osteoporosis Society, of which she is patron and at which he was to be guest of honour, has been cancelled. So has a holiday that they planned to take together in Scotland later this month.

"Diana's death has set Charles and Camilla back years," said Judy Wade, Royal correspondent for *Hello!* magazine. "It is the worst thing that could possibly have happened

to them. Their situation is absolutely hopeless.

If Camilla's car is seen near Highgrove in the next six months, it could be the end of them. The public simply won't tolerate it.

The Prince will need to muster all his resources for Saturday. Dr David Starkie, a constitutional expert, detects a growing mood of hostility towards him. "There is such a national head of steam building up at the moment that anything could happen at the funeral," he said.

"I'm not sure that the Royal Family know what they are letting themselves in for. I feel desperately sorry for Prince Charles."



Camilla Parker-Bowles: Charles could have to sideline her

Diana's death has set them back years

Judy Wade, *Hello!* magazine

bond endured from their 15-year marriage. But a loss tinged with ambivalence, possibly with anger, certainly with the guilt that he could have helped prevent her premature passing.

telephone many times from Balmoral, according to friends. But given the near-sacrilicence of Diana, it is inconceivable that they can meet in the near future, and their longer-term hopes of

Profits bloom as flowers carpet footpaths

Amanda Kelly

Never before has such a thick carpet of heart-shaped floral tributes drowned the entrance to any royal palace and never before has business been quite so good for their suppliers.

Florists across the capital have watched their profits soar as thousands of people choose to express their grief for Diana, Princess of Wales, with a simple bunch of flowers.

Shops, stallholders and supermarkets around Buckingham Palace, St James's Palace and Kensington Palace are rushing in extra supplies to meet the demand and companies like Interflora and Teleflora have seen a significant rise in the number of telephone orders.

The Flowers and Plants Association, which represents the industry, predicts that, by the end of the week, Diana's death will have provoked the largest number of floral tributes ever recorded. They believe demand may even exceed that of Mother's Day when orders soar by £50 million.

Spokeswoman Andrea Caldecourt said: "The rush has been going on since Sunday when people began wanting to lay floral tributes. People coming to London at the weekend may well want to bring more flowers with them or to lay them at various sites around the country."

"We don't expect to run out though. A lot of functions in London which would usually have numerous floral displays have been cancelled and there are a lot of flowers available seasonally at the moment."

Connie Chandler, area manager of the Flowers at Waterloo company which has branches at all London's major railway stations, said: "We have been very busy, especially at Charing Cross and Victoria, with lots of people getting off trains and buying flowers before going to their respects."

"We are doing particularly well at the lower end of the market with bunches of roses and carnations. A lot of children are coming to our stalls with their parents and they each want their own bunch of flowers to lay."

"We haven't considered raising our prices, though, because we are busy enough not to have



Say it with flowers: A stallholder at Covent Garden market in central London carrying in new supplies of flowers to meet the huge demand

Photograph: John Voss

Guestlist reflects a world of glamour and celebrities

Michael Streeter

As is life, so in death: Diana's funeral congregation will include a large cross-section of the famous and glamourous with whom the Princess spent much of her adult life.

The guest list, though containing a scattering of politicians and foreign dignitaries, will reflect the Princess's own life, and will be based as much on the views of the Spencer family and her own private office as those of the Palace.

Among the celebrities from the world of pop music, her friend Elton John will be attending the Westminster Abbey service, where it is thought he will sing.

Other pop stars expected are George Michael and Sting, together with his wife Trudi Styler. From a different generation, the Welsh-born singer Shirley Bassey is likely to attend.

Although Saturday's ceremony will not rival designer Gianni Versace's service for sheer volume of fashion glitterati – an event attended by Diana herself – leading figures from that world will be represented. These may include the models Cindy Crawford and Iman, wife of David Bowie.

Other celebrities likely to be asked will include the businessman Richard Branson, Anna Harvey, the deputy editor of *Vogue* magazine, the actor John Travolta, the dancer Wayne Sleep, and the photographer Mario Testino, who took portraits of the Princess for *Vanity Fair*.



In mourning: Diana's friends Jemima Khan (above) and George Michael (below)



Her friend Jemima Khan and the former Pakistan cricket captain Imran Khan will be present, as will Jemima's mother Lady Annabel Goldsmith and Diana's Brazilian friend Lucia Flecha de Lima. Near the top of the list will be Rosa Monckton, one of Diana's closest friends with

whom she shared a holiday in Greece two weeks ago.

It was unclear last night whether former close male friends such as Will Carling, the one-time England rugby captain, will be invited.

Among charity friends will be the Rev Tony Lloyd of The Leprosy Mission, Mike Whitlam, of the British Red Cross and Derek Bodel, of the National AIDS Trust.

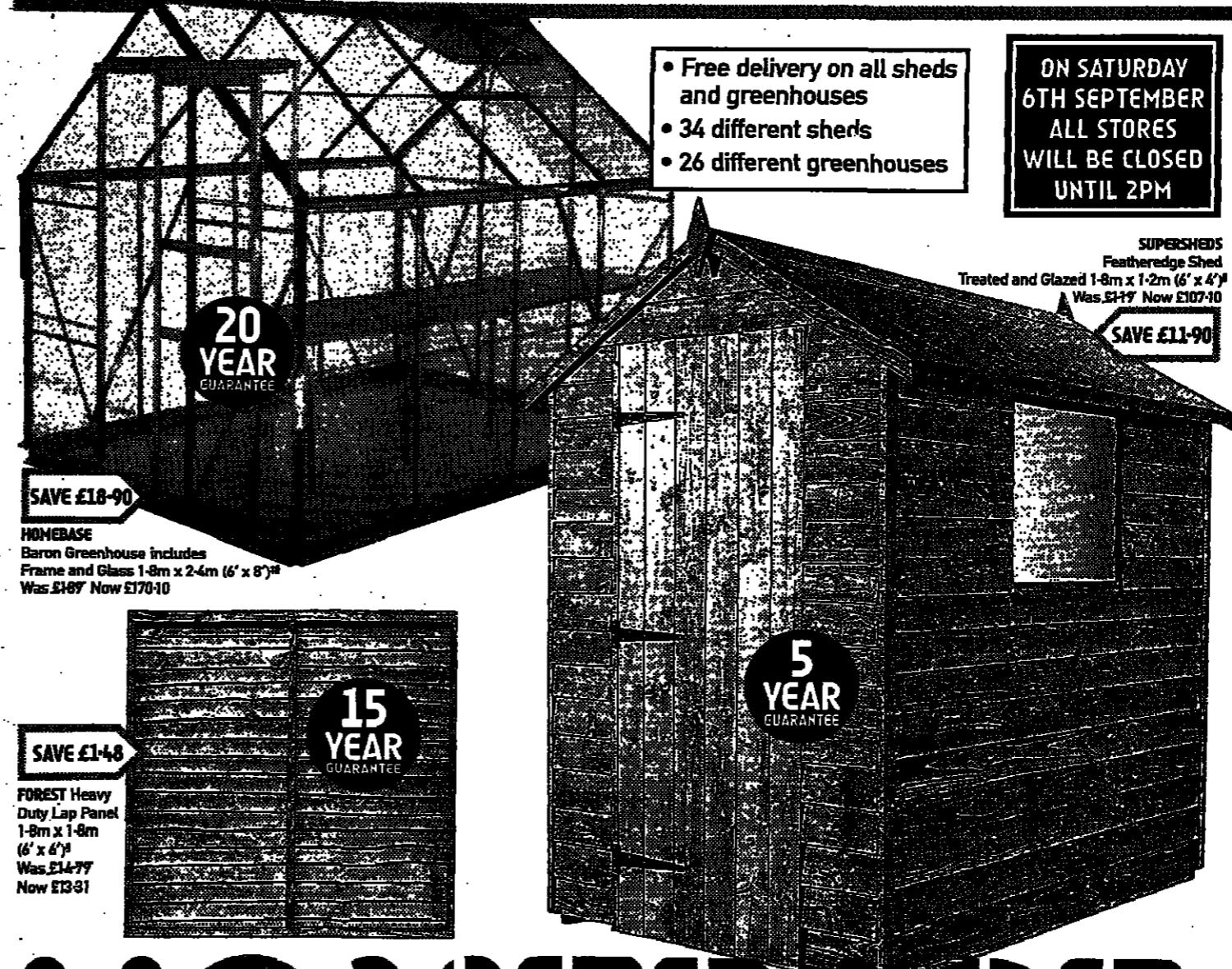
The Church has not sent out the usual endless invitations to ambassadors in black suits, and there has been a deliberate attempt to avoid a dignitary-driven ceremony. However, there will be representatives from other countries, including Hillary Clinton, and the French President Jacques Chirac's wife Bernadette.

The form of the 45 minute service is still not finalised, though it is believed that Verdi's *Requiem*, one of Diana's favourite pieces of classical music, will be played. The organising committee's challenge is to plan a dignified and traditional service which also fits the modern image of the "People's Princess".

Dr William Beaver, the Church of England's head of communications, stressed: "It is a religious occasion and it is a sensitive occasion, but we want it to be one in which everyone can share."

One of the princess's show-business friends, the singer Luciano Pavarotti, has said he was asked to sing – but was too grief-stricken to accept.

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Diana 1961-1997

the media

Biggest television event in history

Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

The funeral is expected to be the biggest television event in history and the BBC will make so much money from covering it and selling Diana-related programmes that it has decided to give all the money it makes to her memorial fund.

Estimates of a television audience of 2.5 billion is already being mentioned, but worldwide figures are notoriously difficult to estimate. Forty-five broadcasters have already requested a feed from the BBC's cameras in Westminster Abbey and along the funeral route, and the BBC will charge them for the coverage "at normal news rates", according to a spokesman.

The BBC's coverage will be led by David Dimbleby, with Tom Fleming - the voice of countless Remembrance Day ceremonies - commenting on the service.

In the biggest outside broadcast operation ever undertaken 100 cameras and 300 technicians will cover the funeral in a simulcast for BBC1 and BBC2. BBC World, the corporation's international channel, will broadcast to a further 187 countries. All five national radio stations will merge with local radio in a programme broadcast by Radio 4's James Naughtie.

Both the BBC and ITN will have cameras inside Westminster Abbey. ITN, which is also supplying other national broadcasters, will have 19 cameras inside the Abbey and 50 covering the route.

TV's top draws

Winston Churchill's funeral (1965) - 350 million (Europe)
Wedding of Charles and Diana (1981) - 700 million
3 Tenors Concert (1990) - 800 million
Superbowl (1993) - 750 million
3 Tenors and World Cup Final (1994) - 1.4 billion
Opening Ceremony of the Olympics (1996) - 3.5 billion

(The global audience is expected to dwarf all previous events)

ITN's coverage will be led by Trevor McDonald, with Jon Sutcliffe providing the formal commentary along the route and inside the Abbey. ITN and the BBC are supplying pictures to the two giant screens in Hyde Park for the crowds who cannot get to the funeral route.

BBC and ITN journalists will account for just a fraction of the number covering the funeral. The big three American networks, CNN, NBC and ABC have been broadcasting their nightly news reports from London all week and have brought

an estimated 150 staff into London to provide coverage.

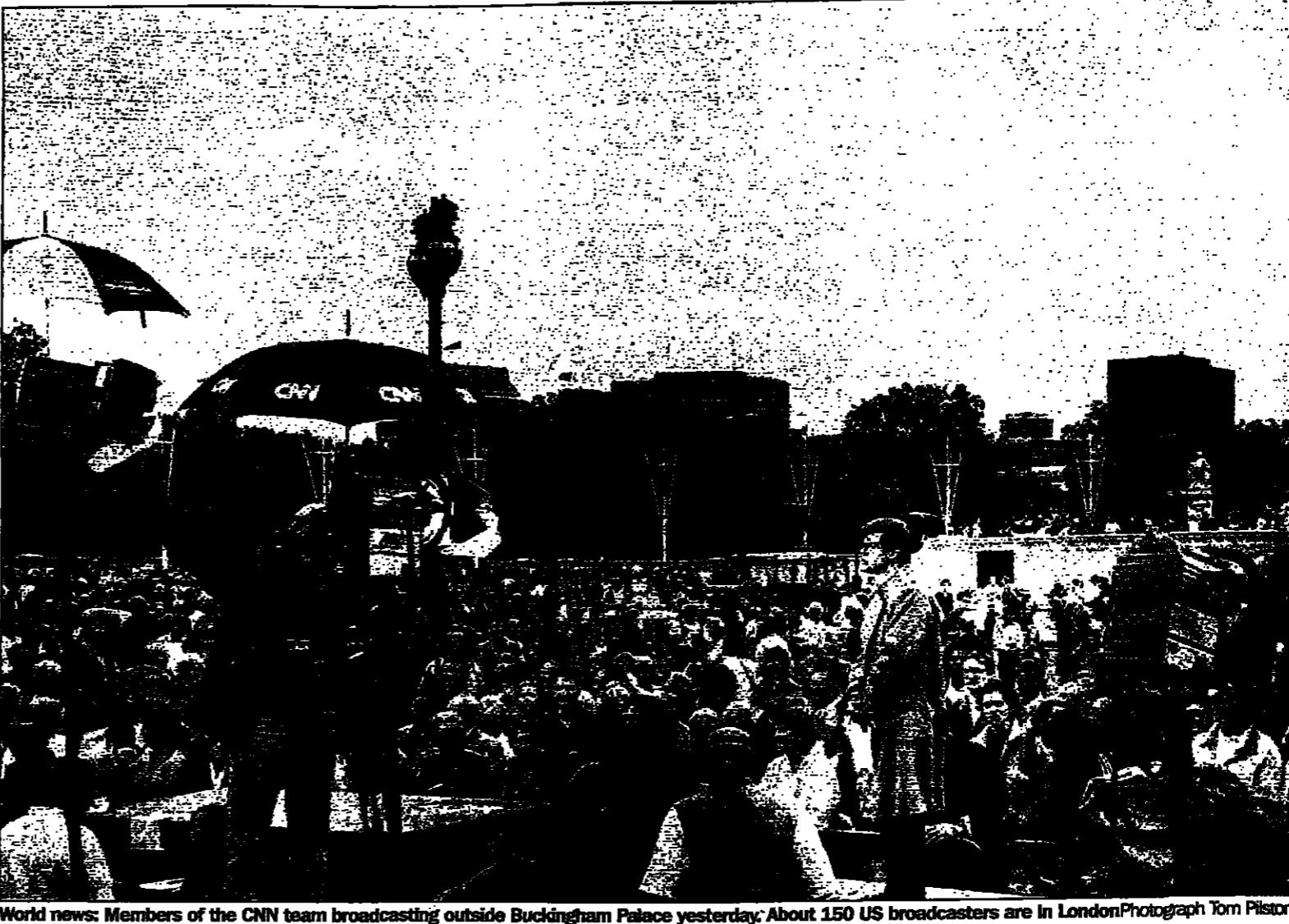
NBC has been trying to sign up Tina Brown, British editor of the *New Yorker* to contribute to its coverage which will be led by anchor Tom Brokaw. ABC has the doyenne of American TV news Barbara Walters and CBS will use Dan Rather. CNN, which believes its pictures have the potential to reach 500 million people, will use Bernard Shaw, the anchorman made famous by the Gulf War. The Foreign Press Association has registered 300 new journalists in London to cover the funeral, but believes thousands more have not registered.

The total global audience is predicted to dwarf all previous events of this magnitude. Ironically, the wedding of Prince Charles and Diana in 1981 captured a then record 700 million viewers.

As records go, however, the estimated crowd of 2 million that is expected in central London on Saturday will come nowhere near the 10 million Iranians - 20 per cent of the population - who gathered at the funeral of their supreme leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in 1989.

The BBC is also making money by selling the overseas rights to the Princess's famous *Panorama* interview and the *Heart of the Matter* programme, "Diary of a Princess", when she went to Angola to highlight the problem of landmines.

It is also selling on footage of the Princess from its library and the rights to *A People's Princess*, the tribute to Diana shown on Sunday night.



World news: Members of the CNN team broadcasting outside Buckingham Palace yesterday. About 150 US broadcasters are in London. Photograph: Tom Pilston

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The lakes of death bred by rain and sun

Nicholas Schoon

Millions of gallons of black and stinking floodwater have caused a farming and ecological disaster on one of Britain's most important and unusual wetlands.

Thousands of fish – bream, pike, roach and others – have been killed by the stagnant, deoxygenated water which has covered hundreds of acres of the Somerset Levels for the past month. Rich cattle pastures have been wiped out.

The Government's Environment Agency is using large quantities of hydrogen peroxide, a volatile, corrosive chemical, to raise oxygen levels in the floodwater, so that it can be pumped off the fields and into a river without killing more fish.

Exactly a month ago, heavy downpours flooded more than one thousand acres of land. When the rain stopped and the

sun shone, the temperature climbed and bacteria began to rot the lush grass and cattle dung lying below the surface.

The microbes consumed most of the oxygen dissolved in the water within a few days. The decomposition turned the water black, produced a foul stench and killed the abundant fish, snails and water insects living in the network of ditches and dikes which drain the levels.

First the Environment Agency tried pumping the water into nearby rivers, which just killed more fish. Then they bubbled fresh oxygen through the water, which was simply too large a task – there are 50 million gallons of water after all.

The last hope was hydrogen peroxide. This corrosive chemical, more normally used as hair bleach, adds free oxygen to water. More than sixty tons of the chemical will have been mixed in



After the flood: The Somerset levels near Curry Rivel where 50 million gallons of rainwater have lain rotting for a month, creating poisonous lakes and killing fish. Scientists have added hydrogen peroxide to re-oxygenate the water

Photograph: Marc Hill

by the time the task is finished, probably this weekend. Pumping the then fish-friendly water can then begin in earnest.

The levels around Glastonbury and Bridgwater are mostly

Government-designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest. These fish pastures are a haven for more than 10,000 ducks and wading birds in winter and spring. There

is a rich variety of plants and smaller animals living on the pastures and in the ditches, although parts of the levels are used for intensive cattle farming.

The National Farmers Union said some 50 farmers were

affected. "The more productive grazing and silage fields will have to be ploughed up," said regional director Anthony Gibson. "The floodwater was like a rancid soup, stinking to high heaven."

The water which has already receded has left behind brown, dead, vegetation. "The moor looks very sick, sad and sorry," said John Leete, for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Herons have been flocking in to eat all the dead fish. "There are worries about the vegetation and the fish, but I think the birds are going to be fine," said Mr Leete.

Greens expose illegal trade in CFCs

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

A bogus CFC trading company set up by green campaigners in London has highlighted widespread smuggling of the banned, ozone-destroying chemicals worldwide.

The deception by the Environmental Investigation Agency shows there are several firms willing to use false documentation and subterfuge to flout trade measures aimed at phasing out CFCs, which consume the Earth's protective ozone shield.

The fake firm approached three Chinese companies, one of which, Ningbo Sino-Resource Import Export of Zhejiang, explained that it could alter virgin, mass-produced CFCs made in China to appear as recycled product – which can still be traded within the European Union.

"Frankly speaking, we are supplying F12 [CFC 12] overseas," said a fax from the Chinese company's president, Joe Koman, to the bogus firm, Trans-Cool Trading. "However, some clients ask us to reduce purity and make F12 like to be [sic] recycled for the sake of import licence. The above is our secret between you and me. Please do not leak it out."

The production of CFCs, used mainly in refrigeration and air conditioning, has been banned in the developed world for more than a year under the Montreal Protocol, a treaty aimed at restoring the ozone layer. Users are being urged to swap to more expensive but ozone-friendly chemicals.

Countries such as China and India have until 2010 to phase out CFCs under this treaty, but they are banned from exporting to the developed world.

Governments envisaged that the market price of CFCs would

soar as remaining supplies were consumed and more and more users were compelled to switch to the substitutes. Instead prices remained suspiciously low.

There is mounting evidence that there are Chinese producers willing to export and middle-men in the West seeking big profits in smuggling in the cheap CFCs. This summer the director of a small German company was charged with smuggling more than 600 tonnes of CFCs from China.

Some firms advertise cheap CFCs on the Internet. The Environmental Investigation Agency set up its dummy firm in order to approach several companies inside Europe and beyond which it suspected were involved in flouting the ban.

In the past few weeks it has received a flurry of faxes, telephone calls and e-mails. Some asked the right question about whether the firm possessed the necessary licences covering the special cases where CFCs can be exported.

Others supplied a price – usually way below the market price for the residue of stockpiled or recycled CFCs still being traded within the EU. One Chinese company promised false recycled certificates.

The bogus firm also entered into negotiations with two Spanish firms which, says the agency, are setting out to flout the ban on CFC trading. It also believes a firm based in Birmingham has played a major part in exporting large quantities of CFCs from Russia to the US.

The agency is calling for a ban on any sales of CFCs within the EU, and closure of the exemptions and loopholes. Next week government delegates from more than 100 nations meet in Montreal to negotiate further tightening of the international controls on ozone-destroying chemicals.



DAILY POEM

An Upbraiding

By Thomas Hardy

Now I am dead you sing to me
The songs we used to know,
But while I lived you had no wish
Or care for doing so.

Now I am dead you come to me
In the moonlight, comfortless,
Ah, what would I have given alive
To win such tenderness!

When you are dead, and stand to me
Not different, as now;
But like again, will you be cold
As when we lived, or how?

"An Upbraiding" first appeared in the collection *Moments of Vision*, in November 1917. It appears in the Oxford World's Classics edition of Hardy's *Selected Poetry*, edited by Samuel Hynes (OUP, £3.99).

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news

Abbey develops a bad habit with £1 charge for counter service

Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

"I've never heard of anything so cheeky in all my life," fumed Keith Sinclair, a communications quality manager, and most of his fellow Abbey National customers agreed with him.

Yesterday the bank started charging some customers for queuing up inside branches rather than using its cash machines and telephone banking service. Abbey National's Instant Plus account-holders will now have to pay £1 for basic over-the-counter transactions. Instant Plus, launched last year, is a card-based account and customers are meant to use cash machines or the 24-hour telephone banking service. But some people have been queuing inside branches along with everyone else.

"This new initiative is

intended to help reduce queues in branches and free counters for customers with more complex queries," said a spokesman. "A number of Abbey National's competitors have been levying similar charges for some time."

But the Abbey's move annoyed customers using their branches yesterday. Jackie McGovern, an Instant Plus holder, had queued for a statement only to be told that she would be charged. "I'd been standing there and they said 'We'll have to charge you for this because you're not using the machine. I didn't realise you could get them free out of the machine. But changing people like this isn't very impressive."

"It's a consequence of the building societies going public," said Keith Sinclair. "It's the thin end of the wedge. This'll go on and on."

But Gary Bradshaw, a merchant banker, said: "They are just moving with the times, and hopefully they'll pass on the savings to the customers when they are able to reduce staff numbers."

Simon Smith, an accountant, said: "It's the first I've heard of it. I don't like using machines at all and try to avoid it when I can. Deborah Hyde said: "People will end up changing another building society or bank. They will do that if they have to pay."

None of the main high street banks said that they plans to introduce such charges. Britannia Building Society charges £1 for counter withdrawal if the balance is less than £100, as does the Coventry Building Society. The Alliance and Leicester charges 60p for counter withdrawals when more than two are made in a month or the balance is less than £1,000.



Brought to account: Customers are furious that the Abbey National has begun charging those who do not use cash machines. Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

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300 trains cut from flagship route

Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

One of the first privatised commuter train companies will cut more than 350 services from its winter timetable after failing to attract passengers on a flagship inner London route.

Connex South Central, a French-owned train company, is to axe 58 trains every weekday from its much-heralded south London Metro service as well as 12 every day on two other routes.

The company said that it had only managed to increase passenger numbers by 12 per cent since the Metro service started in January. It has also failed to negotiate a new pay deal with the drivers' union Aslef - which has meant costs were higher than expected and has led the company randomly to cancel many trains at short notice.

Connex will escape penalties over the cuts because they do not affect the minimum service levels to which the company committed itself when it took over running the trains last year.

Passenger groups reacted furiously to the news. Save Our Railways, the anti-privatisation lobby, pointed out that the company received more than £3.5m a week in subsidy from the Government, adding that it was unacceptable that Connex South Central was "raking in public money while slashing services".

The London Regional Passengers' Committee (LRPC) said it was "amazed and profoundly disappointed" by the cuts, but Connex said it would be running more trains than last winter and was exceeding service requirements on all its routes. Sir Alan Greengross, chair-

man of LRPC, said: "One begins to wonder whether the critics of railway privatisation were right to suggest that we, the passengers, would be faced with cuts as soon as the financial going got tough."

More ominously was the response from the passenger franchising director's office, which awarded Connex the contract to run trains. A spokesman said that John O'Brien, the franchising director, was "clearly disappointed that cuts are being made and hoped these services could be restored in the future".

A Connex spokesman argued that there were often changes between summer and winter timetables. However, railway observers noted that on commuter train lines there was no difference in the types of traveller that used the service between seasons.

The south London services have been reduced partly through lack of demand and partly to improve reliability elsewhere," the company spokesman added.

The cuts also scupper plans for a turn-up-and-go metro system for south London, which is not served well by the capital's sprawling Tube network.

Liberal Democrat Paul Burstow, MP for Sutton and Cheam, pledged to do everything possible to ensure Connex backed down over "unjustified" cuts. "The cuts may be legally permissible but they certainly make no sense in attempting to encourage more people back onto the railways," he said.

"It's simply scandalous that despite receiving millions of pounds each week in government subsidy such cuts are even being considered."

Travellers pay price of advice

Randeep Ramesh

Passengers could be paying double the price of a rail ticket or face being stranded if they follow the instructions from the national telephone inquiry service, according to a Consumers' Association report released yesterday.

The association's magazine *Which?* also claimed that compensation payments for travellers who have been inconvenienced by delays and cancellations are both confusing and inconsistent.

In a survey of four rail companies - South West Trains - which had to cancel dozens of trains every day earlier this year - was rated the poorest in providing passenger information.

When *Which?* sought information from the National Rail Enquiry Service (NRES), it got incorrect details in 41 out of 70 cases.

Researchers said that the service gave the right price just four out of 21 times when they asked about the cost of travel-

ling from Basingstoke in Hampshire to Carlisle in Cumbria and returning via London.

Some NRES staff told passengers to buy two single tickets for nearly £120 - £60 more than necessary, *Which?* claimed. It found the service gave wrong information about engineering works that might affect travel times six out of fourteen times.

In a survey of passengers using Connex South Central, South West Trains, ScotRail and West Anglia Great Northern, *Which?* found that the latter had the highest commuter rating for providing information and SWT the lowest.

"Many people would like to switch to public transport but are unlikely to travel by rail if they can't rely on getting the correct information," said the magazine's senior editor, Andrew McIlwraith.

The *Which?* findings follow warnings last month from the rail regulator, John Swift, that train companies faced big fines if the performance of the NRES did not improve immediately.

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news

Time for a change as Butlin's says bye-de-bye to the past

Glenda Cooper
and Andrew Yates

It has been the butt of endless jokes, sent up in *Carry On Camping* and the television sitcom *Hi-De-Hi*. Yet Billy Butlin's vision more than 60 years ago to provide a "week's holiday for a week's wage" transformed the nation's attitude to holidays. Since then, the fortunes of Butlin's have provided a slice of social history reflecting the leisure pursuits of the British public from the invention of the knobby knees competition to the modern-day introduction of the *Modern Dazz Cafes*.

Yesterday, its owners, the Rank Group, announced that the centres are to undergo a multi-million pound facelift designed to take the concept into

the new millennium, saying the revamp will once more revolutionise the holiday industry.

Butlin's holiday camps at Minehead, Skegness and Bognor Regis will all be overhauled, with the centrepiece of the new development a "skylight pavilion", a weatherproof canopy the size of Wembley football pitch designed to house anything from comedy acts to West End shows. Holidaymakers will also be able to see a film at the local Odeon, drink in themed pubs or have a flutter at the Meccano bingo hall while packing the kids off to activity centres.

The new camps will house of string of high-street names including Burger King and Harry Ramsden's fish and chips.

It seems a far cry from Butlin's beginning. When the first



half-page advertisement for the camp at Ingoldmells, on the Lincolnshire coast ran in the *Daily Express* offering a week's holiday by the sea for between 30 shillings and £3, Butlin's was deluged with 10,000 replies.

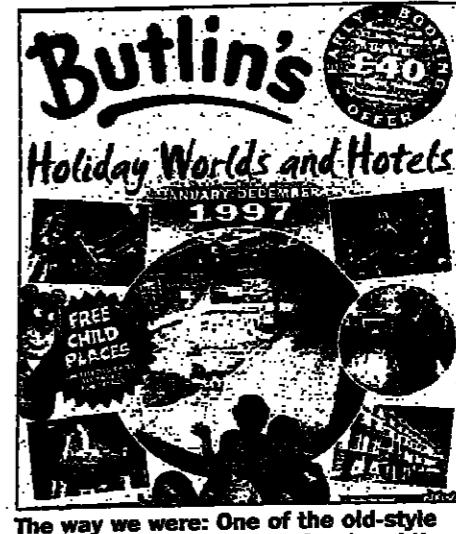
Not only was Butlin's offering affordable holidays but he also promised that the accommodation would be better than that at home. The Butlin's motto - "Our True Intent Is All For Your Delight" - was no exaggeration. There was waiter service in the dining room, electric light in the chalets and hot running water in the bath blocks - facilities that many people in the 1930s did not have at home.

Before Butlin's, the families who did get away stayed in boarding houses where they were forced to leave after breakfast and stay out all day regardless of the weather. Butlin's was offering a swimming pool and a 4,000-seater stadium for

greyhound and cheetah races. In the best tradition of British holidays, it was snowing when the first camp opened. But there were no complaints from the holidaymakers - for many, it was their first holiday. And because it was, many of them had no idea what to do. In desperation Butlin sent a young worker out to buy a red jacket and encourage people to join in. The Redcoats were born, and the job was to breed a new generation

of showbiz personalities: Jimmy Tarbuck, Charlie Drake, Tommy Steele, Anne Diamond, Isla St Clair, Des O'Connor and Michael Barrymore all took their first steps to stardom wearing the famous scarlet jacket. Inevitably, Butlin's became a victim of its own success.

People became more sophisticated, and as air travel became cheaper holiday firms were able to offer packages abroad with the one thing that



The way we were: One of the old-style camps (Photograph: Hulton Getty) and the new-look brochure

History of a very British holiday

1936: Skegness camp opens on Easter Saturday. It snows. 1938: Second camp opens in Clacton. Legions of schoolchildren entitled workers to a week's paid holiday a year. 1943: Nearly 100,000 holidaymakers visit Skegness and Clacton. 1945-62: Period of

expansion culminating in launch of eight camps in Minehead. 1964: Billy Butlin knighted. 1972: Butlin's sold to the Rank - takes over a million bookings. 1983-5: Clacton and Filey closed and sold. 1986-88: £180m invested in modernisation.

Butlin's could not guarantee: sunshine.

Rank is now attempting to re-vamp Butlin's image in several ways. The traditional chalets are to be replaced by a range of up-market accommodation: the skyline pavilions will aim to attract an increasing number of contemporary entertainment acts: "oases of calm" will be provided for the older generation; and even the Redcoats are to get a new uniform.

All this will come at a price, however. A family of four could have to pay up to £70 a week during the peak summer months, compared to less than £30 today, under some of the special offers available.

Butlin's two other sites, at Pwllheli and Ayrshire, are to be converted to "Haven" camps - all-action parks offering everything from tenpin bowling to indoor swimming pools.

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PENTIUM II FUJ

Lottery cash for parks, says poll

David Lister

The public wants lottery money spent on making parks safe for children, not on buying works of art, according to a poll carried out for one of the main distributors of lottery cash.

The MORI poll commissioned by the Heritage Lottery Fund – but not released to the national press – found that parks, particularly national parks, remain the top priority for preservation. And public priorities for funding focus on providing access for disabled people and ensuring local parks are made safe for children.

Buying works of art – a cause on which the Heritage Lottery Fund has so far spent millions of pounds – struck the public as “the least urgent use of lottery funds”.

Equally, support for the preservation of museums, stately homes and gardens and industrial heritage has fallen sharply over the past two years. Only 29 per cent see museums as a priority for preservation (a 14 per cent drop since 1995), only 13 per cent cite stately homes (a 16 per cent drop) and only 11 per cent cite industrial heritage (a 12 per cent drop).

Thirty-six per cent are unhappy with the whole concept of lottery money paying for heritage projects. They wish to see more money given to charities and health, and are also believe that Camelot, the organiser, is taking too much money from the lottery.

The findings will have considerable implications for the

use of lottery money by the Heritage Lottery Fund, which is chaired by Lord Rothschild. They will also cause alarm bells to ring for museums and art galleries which look to the Fund to buy works of art for them, and will now fear a change in policy.

As a spokesman for the Heritage Lottery Fund said yesterday: “This is part of a large consultation programme and we will be studying the comments made before issuing new guidelines for the distribution of lottery grant by the end of the year.”

The Fund has distributed £680m of lottery money in total, with £524m going to museums and galleries, and £30m purely on buying works of art.

David Barrie, director of the National Art Collections Fund, said last night: “There is a real danger of the definition of heritage being stretched to breaking point. It is very important that the HLF be available to buy great works of art. Local parks are supported by local government. Museums and galleries have no money at all to purchase works of art.”

MORI interviewed almost 2,000 people. As well as respondents stressing the importance of more access to parks for the disabled (81 per cent) and making them safe for the young (76 per cent), there were marked increases in believing it very important that projects given lottery funds benefit the local community and that they help protect the countryside.



Safekeeping: Fireplaces are stored and restored at Edinburgh's Holyrood Architectural Salvage. Photographs: Colin McPherson

Staying one step ahead of the fireplace thieves



A property owner in Queen Street takes precautions

Jason Bennett

Property owners in Scotland have become so fed up with criminals breaking in and stealing antique chimney pieces that they are having them removed and advertising their properties as “fireplace free zones”.

The bizarre crime prevention measure follows a spate of burglaries in Edinburgh in which gangs of thieves have ripped out fire surrounds which can be worth up to £20,000.

Georgian homes in Edinburgh and old city-centre businesses, particularly in the financial section, have been targeted in the past eight months. The most sought-after designs are by the famous 18th-century Scottish architect Robert Adam.

Many businesses in the centre of Edinburgh have relocat-

ed to green field sites, leaving their former premises empty. These have then become an easy target for the fireplace crooks.

The combined cost of the damage caused by the break-in, having the fireplace torn from the wall, and the loss of the chimney piece itself have persuaded some property owners to remove the item of desire before the criminals arrive.

Once the fireplaces have been stored at a secure location the owners have been placing cards in the windows informing would-be burglars not to bother.

Warning notices for criminals are already used by motorists to try and prevent thieves smashing their car windows in search of hi-fi equipment. The next stage could be individuals hanging a sign around their necks saying “don’t mug, no mug”.

Getaway driver told police of killings

Jason Bennett

Crime Correspondent

A getaway driver for two killers who used shotguns to execute three fellow drug dealers in a country lane later became a police “supergrass”, a court heard yesterday.

The three men were allegedly killed in Essex over a row about a consignment of poor quality cannabis. They were lured to their death by a bogus promise of a major new cocaine deal.

Following the execution, one of the killers likened himself to the “angel of death”, the Old Bailey court was told.

The accused murderers, Michael Steele, 55, and Jack Whomes, 36, were driven away at high speed from the shootings, allegedly laughing at their actions in shooting the men in the head as the waited in a Land Rover on a snowy night in December 1995.

Steele “said he felt a bit like the angel of death – he had

done everyone a favour and got rid of the sort of people you would not want around”, said Andrew Munday, QC, prosecuting.

Steele, from Clacton, Essex, and Whomes, from Brockford, Suffolk, wore surgical gloves, overalls and Wellington boots for the murders at point blank range and afterwards were splattered with blood, according to counsel.

Whomes and Steele have denied murdering the three men. They – and a third man, Peter Corry, 45, from Clacton

– also deny conspiring to import cannabis in late 1995.

Steele believed that Mr Tate had threatened him over an earlier shipment of poor quality cannabis and decided with Whomes to eliminate the threat, the prosecution has alleged.

Patrick Tate, 37, Anthony Tucker, 38 and Craig Rolfe, 26, all from Essex, were killed in Rentenden, Essex.

Whomes and Steele have denied murdering the three men. They – and a third man, Peter Corry, 45, from Clacton

– of the vehicle he put shots into each of their heads within a matter of moments.

“He said it was a natural act – almost as if he was doing something else. It was emotionless,” he said.

Mundy told the jury: “He said that he, Steele, had shot one of the deceased with both barrels because that person had moved. He said he had re-loaded and shot the other two and the gun had fallen apart. The case continues.

UNWIND.

At around £15,000 for a luxury saloon, it's hard to believe it's not a wind-up.

international

Climate of change: In the West, an environmental triumph; in the Far East, a growing catastrophe

German forests return to health

Imre Karacs
Bonn

They are there at the edge of every German town; inviolable barriers to progress, places of worship for the romantic soul, and the source of angst for a nation living in fear of modernity. In the 1980s the brown-bellied bats of oak and pine became the symbol of decline, spawning the most powerful environmentalist movement in the world.

The planet still needs to be saved, so the Greens continue to enjoy the support of one out of every seven German voters, and have excellent prospects of entering the national government next year. But the forests are returning to rude health.

"Studies going back to 12 years show that initial pessimistic forecasts of the imminent death of our forests were false," states the government's first report on the nation's woodlands. The report, published yesterday, says that the condition of trees has been improving since 1994.

In that year, 36 per cent of all German trees appeared to be undamaged. In 1996, 43 per cent received a clean bill of health. In the same period, the proportion of severely damaged trees has fallen from 25 per cent to less than 20 per cent.

Although the scientific jury is still out on the exact causes of the disease which gripped Europe's forests in the past decade, the government's experts attribute much of the damage to pollutants. Nowhere in the 80-page document is acid rain mentioned, but the acid-forming sulphur dioxide gas is singled out as one of the chief culprits.

Such diagnosis certainly fits in with the alleged cure. The government puts itself on the back for passing anti-emission laws which were aimed at reducing the noxious fumes held responsible for the epidemic.

The first such law was enacted in 1983, in response to pressure from environmentalists. As a result of these measures, Germans now drive the cleanest cars in the world, mandatorily equipped with catalytic converters. The greening of industry appears to have been less successful, as any visit to the belching towers of the Ruhr can attest.

But at least the car is off the hook, to the great joy of Germany's most powerful lobby. The government report appears to show that technology can be harnessed to the benefit of the environment, and progress is not always destructive.

Yet the Greens still carp, pointing out that low-emission engines de-



Falling out: Trees on the old border with the East Bloc, which was a potent source of pollution

Photograph: Environmental Images

Malaysia calls in a rainmaker to wash away the smog

Richard Lloyd Parry

In the Klang Valley, the heart of industrialised Malaysia, they have not seen the sky for two months, and in parts of Brunei motorists have been driving with their headlights on during the middle of the day. In Kuala Lumpur, cases of asthma are up by 50 per cent, and dozens of flights have been cancelled.

The Indonesian government, which began by blaming it on the poor, yesterday placed responsibility with the rich, and its environment minister, Sarwono Kusumaatmadja,

called the situation a "national disaster".

What 19th-century Londoners knew as smog and modern Athenians refer to as the *nephos* (clouds) has finally come to South-East Asia. Here it is known simply as "the haze" – a thick cloud of smoke and pollutants which has hovered over the region's cities for much of the summer. Yesterday, for the first time, the Malaysian government announced its intention to hire private rain-making aircraft to seed clouds to wash away the worst of the haze. "We are facing a serious threat to the health

of 20 million people," Mr Kusumaatmadja said.

No one wants to take responsibility for such a disaster, but its broad causes are fairly clear. The reassuring explanation – reassuring because it lies beyond the control of any government – is an atmospheric phenomenon known as El Niño – the "Christ Child". El Niño sounds unexciting – a warm ocean current which originates off the coast of Ecuador every two to seven years (frequently around Christmas, hence its name). But the consequences of a powerful El Niño, like the one now surging

across the Pacific Ocean, are devastating and amazingly widespread. Storm fronts batter California. Unseasonal rain soaks Israel. Billions of plankton perish off Peru along with the marine animals which feed on them, crippling the country's fishing industry. And South-East Asia suffers extended droughts. According to Mr Kusumaatmadja yesterday, this year's monsoon rains are not expected until December, two months late. The drought is bringing failures of rice, coffee and maize crops as far away as Java and North Korea.

It is also creating the dry condi-

tions ideal for forest fires. Most of these are in Indonesia, whose government seems unable to make up its mind about their extent. On Monday, 740,000 acres were reckoned to have been burned, but yesterday this figure was reduced to 250,000. Either way, the smoke they are producing is drifting across from the huge islands of Sumatra and Borneo and blanketing the region.

In another about-turn, the Indonesian government has absolved those originally fingered for starting the fires – indigenous tribes people practising traditional slash and burn

farming. Mr Kusumaatmadja says he true culprits are "big bosses", the owners of Indonesia's many lucrative logging concessions who have cleared vast areas of rain forest for timber and for rubber planting. "While bosses of large plantations just walk into their air-conditioned offices if the situation becomes too smoky, these voiceless people have to take all the blame and suffer from suffocating smoke," he told the *Jakarta Post* newspaper.

But it is not the fires alone which are too blame. As in Victorian Britain, or post-war Greece, smog is a result of high-speed industrialisa-

tion, the very industrialisation which has transformed South-East Asia into the world's fastest growing economic region. In the Klang Valley, around the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur, 10,000 new vehicles are sold every month. The affluence which has accompanied this growth has given Asians opportunities which they could never have imagined a generation ago. This year, however, it is also depriving them of what they could never have imagined losing – the sun in the morning, and the sight of the blue sky above their heads.

Leading article, page 17

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JOHN LEWIS

Bounty hunter killings echo the Wild West

David Usborne
New York

The killings in Arizona last weekend of a couple in their bed by a posse of bounty hunters has thrown the spotlight on a violent arm of the American justice system that recalls the "Dead or Alive" posters of the old Wild West.

Arizona police confirmed that five men, who described themselves as "fugitive recovery agents", broke into a Phoenix home at 4am on Sunday morning apparently in pursuit of a California man who had jumped bail.

What happened inside has outraged America and prompted politicians in Arizona to call for laws curbing bounty hunters, whose lucrative trade is to track down runaways on behalf of bail bond agencies.

Armed with long-barrel handguns and clad in black ski-masks, the men burst into the house, held a couple and three children at gunpoint and then sledge-hammered their way into the bedroom of Chris Foote, 23, and his girlfriend, 20-

year-old Spring Wright. A gunfight ensued after Mr Foote fired a handgun beside his bed. In a hail of bullets, two of the bounty hunters were wounded. Mr Foote and Ms Wright were killed outright.

Police believe that the raid was a blundershine there is nothing to connect the residents with the man being sought by the bounty hunters. "It's a mystery to us," said police spokesman, Mike Torres.

Leading a campaign to change the Arizona law is Chris Foote's father, Tom. "I used to think I was safe in my house," he said. "Now I don't. This could happen to any family."

In all but three US states, bounty hunters can operate without a licence and with fewer controls than legitimate police officers. The legality of the industry is based on a Supreme Court ruling of 1873 - in an era when the western frontier was still being established.

Experts believe that there are as many as 2,000 bounty hunters in the US, benefiting from the pressures of overflowing courtrooms and prisons. It is thought

that of the roughly 35,000 people who jump bail annually, as many as 87 per cent are brought to justice by bounty hunters.

The lack of controls is highlighted by so-called "bounty-hunting schools offering "full" training courses in three days. Alternatively, aspiring bounty hunters can simply buy starter kits which include a black kit bag, leg irons, handcuffs, pepper spray and an all-black outfit of t-shirt, jacket and cap.

"There's been little change in the law since the territorial days when bounty hunters were used by sheriffs to look for people who had robbed stage-coaches," said Arizona State Senator, John Kaites. "In 1997 we need other means to keep innocent people from getting hurt."

Three of the men involved in Sunday's incident are now in police custody in Phoenix and face charges of second degree murder. Yesterday, however, a full-scale manhunt was underway for the other two members of the posse who were described by police as dangerous.



A Cambodian farm worker watching the burning wreckage of a Vietnam Airlines jet that crashed into a rice paddy yesterday as it approached

Phnom Penh airport in heavy rain. Two young children were believed to be the only survivors from the Soviet-built Tupolev 134, which was carrying 60 passengers and six crew, on its flight from Ho Chi Minh City. Most of the victims were from Taiwan and South Korea. Photograph: Reuters

significant shorts

'Harassment' drives Soros out of Belarus

The Soros Foundation said it was pulling out of Belarus because of harassment of its employees and other barriers to its activities in the hardline former Soviet republic. Relations had grown increasingly tense since March, when the Foundation's local executive, Peter Byrne, was barred from entering Belarus. He was accused of sponsoring the opposition, including members of the mass media who criticise President Alexander Lukashenko's authoritarian style of rule. In March, Washington cut off \$40m (£23m) in aid because of Minsk's human rights record. Reuters - Minsk

Chechens stage public killing

Russia's rebel Chechnya region staged its first public execution yesterday, putting to death by firing-squad a young man and his wife found guilty of murder by an Islamic court. Hundreds of people gathered in the centre of the capital, Grozny, to urge on the masked executioners as they stood the couple against a wall and shot them at point-blank range. Russia's Interfax news agency said the man's second wife had also been sentenced to death but was later pardoned because she was pregnant. Reuters - Grozny

Tarting down

Mexico City prostitutes won a right to ply their trade in exchange for wearing sensible clothes and behaving nicely. In a deal with city authorities they agreed not to wear see-through clothing or skirts more than four fingers above the knee before 10pm. Reuters - Mexico City

THE INDEPENDENT

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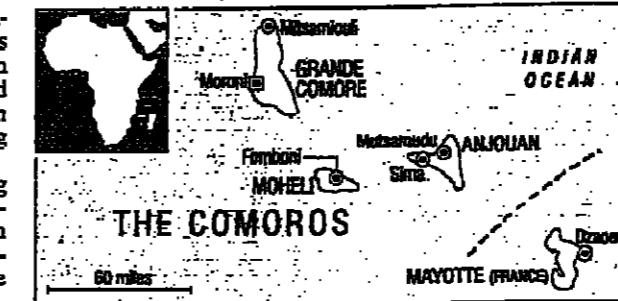
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international

Comoros troops invade rebel island



Resistance: People in the Anjouan town of Mutsamudu passing stone barricades erected by separatists last month. The Comoros government said yesterday that military intervention had pacified Anjouan without bloodshed. Photograph: AFP



Moroni (Reuters) — Government troops on the Comoros group ignored appeals from Africa and France yesterday and invaded the island of Anjouan to try to end a month-long secession by force.

After days of sabre-rattling and preparations, two boatloads of troops landed early in the morning, according to diplomats in Moroni, capital of the Indian Ocean archipelago.

President Mohamed Taki's government later confirmed the operation. "The security forces are progressively re-establishing the republican order, the freedom and the safety of persons in Anjouan, mainly in Mutsamudu and Domoni," a statement from the presidency said.

Diplomats said the invasion targets were Anjouan's main town and port of Mutsamudu, the airport at Ouani four miles east of Mutsamudu and the town of Domoni.

Anjouan, the second largest of the three-island group off the East African coast, seceded on 3 August after months of protest, civil unrest and clash-

es with security forces that led to several deaths. The smallest of the picture-postcard islands, Moheli, followed suit leaving Mr Taki's government in control of only Grande Comore.

With telephone, air and sea links to Anjouan apparently severed, there was scant information about the invasion. Anjouan residents had earlier pledged to defend their tiny island to the death.

Unconfirmed reports reaching Moroni from Anjouan said the troop ships were anchored at Ouani. They said the troops were repulsed at Mutsamudu or chose to avoid the heavily defended main town.

France repeated earlier calls for negotiations aimed at a peaceful settlement. Paris has opposed the secessions.

The invasion was likely to be condemned by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) whose special envoy, Pierre Yere, warned on Tuesday that an invasion looked imminent.

Political leaders on the two secessionist islands have disagreed on whether they want full independence, a return to French rule or far greater autonomy. But they all agree that the federation, formed after independence from France in 1965, has brought poverty, political instability and a suc-

sion of coups to most of the country's 670,000 people. The legendary French mercenary Bob Denard has played a prominent role in several of those coups. But there was no suggestion he was involved with either side yesterday.

A European who arrived from Anjouan said: "The islanders appear determined to face the Comoran army at whatever cost. I fear this invasion may turn into a bloodbath."

Mr Taki's government has asked the OAU to postpone until October its all-party conference on the Comoros crisis. The talks at OAU headquarters in Ethiopia are planned for 10 September.

Poverty in Comoros contrasts with comparative anti-France-funded prosperity on the island of Mayotte, which remains under French rule.

"The situation which was created on 3 August was unacceptable," said yesterday's government statement on Moroni radio. It accused Anjouan leaders of distributing drugs to young people since pro-secession violence began last March.

Exam question lands professor in PLO prison

Discussion of corruption brings down wrath of Arafat's police

Patrick Cockburn
Jerusalem

Ten weeks ago Fathi Subuh, professor of education and social problems at Gaza's Al-Azhar University, asked his students in their third-year final examination to comment on the reasons for corruption in the Palestinian Authority (PA), which rules the Palestinian enclaves, and in the university itself.

"What are the types of administrative corruption in the governmental departments? What are the reasons behind it?" reads the exam paper set by Dr Subuh. The question seemed relevant since in a poll this July, 45 per cent of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank said that corruption was prevalent in the PA and 41 per cent said it was common.

The Palestinian Preventive Security police did not see it that way. On 2 July they arrested Dr Subuh. The students' essays were later confiscated. Bassam Eid, of the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group, says Dr Subuh was detained at Tel al-Hawa interrogation centre where "his hands were tied and he was beaten". His wife, Fatima, said that when she eventually saw him — his lawyer has been denied access — "He looked like a man who had come out of his grave."

Dr Subuh, who was interrogated for 40 days, is due to appear before the Palestinian high court in Gaza on 9 September, to find out if he is to be charged. Even if his verdict is favourable his troubles may not be over. Last month, Preventive Security simply ignored a court order asking it to explain why it had arrested Dr Subuh in the first place.

The security police have a problem. They have never officially admitted that they are holding Dr Subuh because he raised the issue of corruption, although the confiscation of the exam papers points to the real reason for the arrest. Instead,

they say he is suspected of collaboration with Israel, working for the United States and the Russians and sexually harassing a female student. Given that Dr Subuh was arrested 23 times by the Israelis and the student says no harassment took place, these charges may be difficult to sustain.

In the meantime, Dr Subuh, who is 43, has gone on hunger strike for the second time. "Bad news," his wife said yesterday when asked about her husband's condition. "I've just heard that he went back on hunger strike two days ago. He says that in a week's time he will stop drinking any liquid. I know he has a strong will and he will do what he says."

Mr Eid says a striking aspect of the case is that Dr Subuh has received no support from his university, other professors or his students. This may be in part because Dr Subuh asked his students to comment on corruption at the university. Al-Azhar university has set up a committee to ask Dr Subuh why he set "unacademic questions" in the exam.

The case underlines how little attention the Preventive Security police pay to the Palestinian judicial system and how it portrays any critic of the Palestinian Authority as a collaborator with Israel. In May, Daoud Kuttab, a Palestinian journalist, was arrested in Ramallah for broadcasting the proceedings of the Palestinian parliament on television. Mr Eid says he knows of 117 Palestinians held without trial by the PA and the real figure is probably higher.

Some Palestinian leaders admit that they pay a high political price for the popular belief that the PA is corrupt. Abdel Jawad Saleh, PA minister of agriculture, says Palestinians cannot be united or mobilised "until people feel the PA is not corrupt". He said that in spite of waste and corruption in his ministry he had not been able to sack anybody.

Karadzic ally hints at trial

Belgrade (AP) — One of Radovan Karadzic's closest allies yesterday suggested that the former Bosnian Serb leader wanted to negotiate over demands that he be tried on suspicion of war crimes. Momico Krajisnik made the offer in Pale, a Karadzic stronghold, at a meeting with the UN rights investigator Elisabeth Rehn.

He said he wanted her to meet Mr Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, the former Bosnian Serb army commander, who has also been indicted by the UN war-crimes tribunal. "I suggested... I would play a role... to arrange a meeting of Mrs Rehn with Karadzic and Mladic." Mrs Rehn could mediate between the tribunal and Gen Mladic and Mr Karadzic.

Mr Krajisnik's comments indicated that the Bosnian Serbs' former leader and his associates were feeling pressure put on them by the international com-

munity, which has increasingly come down on the side of the current Bosnian Serb President, Biljana Plavsic, in her struggle against them.

Mr Krajisnik was a wartime associate of Mr Karadzic, and is believed to speak for Mr Karadzic, who is in hiding because of fears he could be snatched by Nato commandos and forced to stand trial.

Mrs Plavsic appeared to be gaining the upper hand in her struggle with Mr Karadzic yesterday after the top Bosnian Serb general, Pero Colic, the army chief of staff, called her "supreme commander" — acknowledging Mrs Plavsic as his superior. Gen Colic late last month put himself squarely in the Karadzic camp. His switch to her side would further weaken Karadzic loyalists and help Western powers in the struggle to isolate the former Bosnian Serb leader.

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Garden cheers: Boris Yeltsin and the Russian Orthodox Patriarch Alexy II at the opening of the square and gardens of Christ the Saviour cathedral in Moscow, destroyed by Stalin in the Thirties but recently rebuilt. Photograph: Reuters

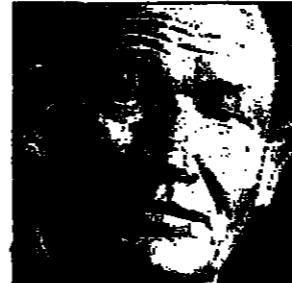
Packer surrenders in newspaper war

Robert Milliken
Sydney

A struggle for control of Australia's media scene involving the country's biggest press barons took a dramatic turn yesterday when Kerry Packer, the country's richest person, announced he was selling his stake in the Fairfax newspaper empire.

Mr Packer and Rupert Murdoch, his main media rival, have brought strong pressure on the conservative coalition government, led by John Howard, over its plans to change the laws on media ownership. Mr Howard had suggested that the government would scrap cross-ownership rules forbidding television proprietors from owning newspapers in the same city.

This would have allowed Mr Packer to realise his ambition of taking over the Fairfax group, whose newspapers are the rich-



Kerry Packer: Takeover of newspaper group thwarted

est and most influential in the country. They include *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age* in Melbourne and the *Australian Financial Review*. The Packer family already controls Australia's biggest magazine empire and Channel Nine, its most powerful commercial television network.

Last month, as Mr Howard recovered from severe pneumonia, he was visited in his official Sydney residence by Rupert Murdoch and his son, Lachlan, who runs the Murdoch Australian publishing empire. The Murdochs are believed to have urged Mr Howard not to relax the cross-ownership laws, fearing such a move would give Mr Packer the lion's share of Australia's media in a market where Mr Murdoch's activity, as a United States citizen, is curbed by other laws restricting control of television networks by foreigners.

The Packers had been confident of taking over Fairfax. James Packer, Mr Packer's son and heir, boasted last May that the family company, Publishing and Broadcasting, hoped to own it by Christmas. But on Monday, the government stunned the industry when it announced that it was indefinitely deferring plans to change the media ownership laws. The Packers lost no time in registering their displeasure when James Packer announced yesterday that their company was selling its 15 per cent holding in Fairfax, its limit under present laws, because it no longer wished to be a "passive investor".

The Fairfax newspapers have been fought over by some of the world's richest media moguls at the next election.

CORREZE DAYS

What's so funny about black socks?

In the profound darkness of a wooded ridge, high above the gorges of the Dordogne River, angry Gallic cries disturbed a languid, storm-threatened evening. "We are the Earth team. Earth leader where are you?"

"Go away, I can't help. I am the Fire leader and I've lost my team." Since I was part of the Air team, and as far as I could tell, our entire group was hopelessly lost, I couldn't help much either.

Fifty grown people, and one seven-year-old boy, were stumbling about in the gloom and heat, trying to locate three simple games – darts, trivial pursuit and a memory contest – hidden somewhere in the 70 acres of grounds of a small château with pointed, fairy-tale turrets.

It was Charlie's fault. I had seen quite enough of holiday entertainment, French-style, at the karaoke evening the night before. (In French karaoke, quavering renditions of Edith Piaf replace tuneless versions of Frank Sinatra; "La Vie en Rose" and "Je Ne Regrette Rien" stand in for "My Way"). But Charlie, aged seven, is a devotee of entertainment of any kind, from open to Noel's House Party. He insisted on taking part in the fun and games every night.

Our last was, on a modest scale, like *Jeux Sans Frontières*, meets orienteering. The teams had to locate and complete all the hidden challenges and get back to the converted barn which was Fun HQ. The sadistic twist was that no team could attempt a challenge until every member of the group was present; hence the anxious waiting for friends lost in the dark.

This was not Butlin's, nor even Club Med. It was a charmingly disorganized family-run *colonie de vacances*: a three-star hotel, with three other categories of accommodation – bungalows, chalets and campsites – scattered in the surrounding forest. We were in one of the chalets and the only French family around.

There was a record number of foreign tourists in France this summer but we were in Corrèze, President Jacques Chirac's home *département*, which is pretty but unspectacular and not near the sea. The tourists were further south, further west.

The atmosphere was informal and relaxed: entertainment of the dottiest kind was provided but there was no enforced jollity. There were scores of rules and rigid timetables: but none was ever applied. No one rose before 10am. The *pièces de résistance* were the 19th-century château and its elegant, but grubby, Thirties swimming pool, overlooking ridge upon ridge of west-central France. It was as if this there had been another French revolution: the bourgeoisie had been disposed of.

and the château turned over to cheap holidays for the workers.

Holidays of this kind, in the green depths of France, away from the crowds, away from the foreigners, are becoming increasingly popular with French people, who, like everyone else, like to go on holiday in France. But our fellow holiday-makers showed no sign of resenting our interloping presence: amusement yes; resentment no.

One of our chalet neighbours was a muscular young Parisian policeman, with two neat, long-healed bullet wounds in his side. Aristide was on holiday with his wife (Francine), his mother-in-law (Francine) and two tough little boys, Mathieu and Thomas. At first, he would roar with laughter whenever he saw us, as if the concept of foreigners was irresistibly funny. Maybe it was my blue canvas shoes and black socks. Black socks, usually worn with sandals, are said by the French to be the certain sign of an Englishman on holiday.

There was also a strange little girl, aged four or five, who would come to stare at us, but refuse to say anything. Clare,

'At first, he would roar with laughter whenever he saw us'

three, found the way to deal with her. She covered her from head to toe in pieces of grass: the little girl still refused to move or say a word.

But Charlie and Clare played boules with all the other children; and Charlie rode his bike with them into the woods. By the end of the week, even Aristide could almost talk to us with a straight face.

I was, however, cruelly discriminated against on the night of the manouevres in the dark. Our team leader was an earnest young man who had missed the whole point and thought the idea of the game was to come first. When we finally located the Trivial Pursuit (in the camp-site showers), I came to his rescue. I knew what the capital of Ireland was.

None the less, when we found the darts, in a tumble-down hut, our leader brushed me aside. I may be useless at boules; Clare regularly defeats me. But as an Englishman, trained in the pubs of Staffordshire and Lancashire, I thought I had a natural right to throw the darts. The leader insisted on doing it himself. He missed all the targets and we scored nul points. To Charlie's disgust, our team came last.

John Lichfield

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The pea-souper that shrouds environmental debate

It is the fate of post-war generations to live with the knowledge that the survival of civilisation depends on our collective ability to regulate our planet's environment. Today we report a dramatic example, as the Malaysian government announces its plan to seed clouds with silver iodide crystals to produce rain to try to wash away the smog that has darkened the sky over Kuala Lumpur for two months. The delay of the monsoon in south-east Asia means that many of the big cities in the region are now permanently enveloped in an old-fashioned London pea-souper, thickened by smoke from forest fires across peninsular Malaya, Sumatra and Indonesia. This is not the only current example of local climate manipulation: this year, the authorities in China are also engaged in modern rain-making, adapting anti-aircraft guns to the purpose, trying to fill the dry Yellow River with water.

Meanwhile, in another part of the forest, we report the findings of a German government survey of the state of its woodland: it seems that the trees are recovering from the onslaught of acid rain, the great environmental cause of a decade ago. It would seem that the collapse of the dirty heavy industries of the Czech Republic and elsewhere in Central Europe, combined with strict emission controls on German industries and cars, has saved the green and pleasant bits of Bavaria.

So, is the big picture one of the industrialised nations getting their "green" act together, while the newly-industrialised countries struggle to deal with the environmental consequences of rapid economic growth? Unfortunately not, unfortunately in the sense that such a summary might imply a happy scenario of progressive improvement as best environmental practice spreads along with high living standards around the globe.

The reality of the environmental crisis facing the world is a great deal more complicated than that. The outlook for the sustainability of life on this planet is also gloomier than such a vision of inevitable progress implies. The truth lies somewhere between two extremes. At one extreme are apocalyptic forecasts of imminent catastrophe – based not on science but on emotion and even millenarianism. At the other extreme is the complacent view that economic development is the best solution to environmental problems. Dr Mahathir Mohamad, prime minister of Malaysia, is an abrasive proponent of this second argument. When Western politicians tried to lecture him about the need to preserve the rainforests in his country, he pointed out rather tartly that we in the West had already cut down our forests, so were in no moral position to tell him what to do. He might point out, too, that the pollution haze which has blocked out the sky in Kuala Lumpur

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is similar to the smogs which blanketed London until prosperity and clean-air legislation made the stars visible again. As Malaysia gets richer, it too will be able to afford cleaner local air.

The flaw in this argument is the remorseless growth both of the world's energy use and its population. A symbol of the increasingly hectic disorder of industrialisation is the Petronas Towers, which last year became the tallest building in the world – but still not tall enough to escape the thick smog of Kuala Lumpur: a monument to Malaysia's economic ambition and to the region's environmental crisis.

It looks, then, as if Robin Cook will have to upset Dr Mahathir again, as he did this week over human rights in the region, if Britain is to pursue a foreign policy which respects the environment as well as people's liberties. This is not a matter of the rich West pulling up the ladder of economic prosperity behind itself, because if Asia, Africa and South America are to pursue higher living standards which can be sustained for more than a generation, then the peoples of North America, Europe and Japan will be called on to change their lifestyles dramatically. Hence the real significance of the acid

rain story is how small-scale it is in the order of global priorities. The balance of scientific consensus is that the forests and lakes of northern Europe have been poisoned by industrial activity, although the chains of causation are more tangled than initially thought. The measures taken to clean up power station emissions and to fit catalytic converters to car exhausts may be beginning to reduce acid rain and improve the quality of the air that we breathe. But they have taken a long time, and are a small gust of fresh air in a growing whirlwind of pollution. Against the overriding challenge of exponentially-growing energy use, which is undeniably causing global climate change (even if the nature of that change is as yet unclear), slightly cleaner emissions in some of the richest and most energy-hungry countries of the world is a side-issue.

It is against this background that we must ask whether some environmentalists are in danger of hurling the very important cause which they profess to advance. Yesterday, a National Consumer Council report drew attention to the difficulty of knowing whether or not recycling bottles and paper is worthwhile; what matters is the amount of energy used throughout the whole life of a product, in its production, packaging, consumption and disposal. Recycling only happens at the end of the process.

It is the inability to distinguish

between the important and the trivial which bedevils the "green" movement. Our schoolchildren are now indoctrinated by green propaganda, a largely unremarked development which could have a dramatic effect on popular values in years to come, except that far too much of it equates the dropping of crisp packets with the threat to the ozone layer. Green values are generally good ones to transmit to our children, but facts and science must be separated from emotion and polemic.

Lots more silver in the lining

They said turning building societies into public limited companies would unleash their entrepreneurial drive. And so it has turned out. We can only marvel at the capitalist verve of Abbey National, which has hit on the ingenious idea of charging people £1 to queue in its branches, a wheeze which started yesterday. Some clever business-school graduate has obviously noticed how the British love queuing, and pointed out the money-making potential of charging them for doing so. It has been said that if four people form a queue on a busy British street, others will join them out of force of habit. A huge untapped market beckons.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Royal Family fails nation in its grief

Sir: Whenever there is a debate about the monarchy's future, the usual suspects trot out to tell us sagely that the Royal Family is an invaluable focus at times of national crisis, a rallying point for our collective anxieties. But as this week's events prove to be the greatest emotional crisis since the war, where are the royals now?

Where are these assorted military princes and dukes offering some recognition of the grief and affection for the mother of the future King? Many expressions of sympathy for the young Princes have gone unacknowledged. Do the Princes even know the concern they are eliciting? Or are they Princes in the Tower, locked away from this no doubt embarrassing display of public emotion "for their own good"?

The frozen silence which has followed the dismally inadequate notice issued by the Queen and her eldest son, adopting the stilted formality used for the victims of a train crash or distant earthquake, explodes the myth that, in a crisis, we need the comforting presence of old-style royalties. So it should not surprise them if a growing proportion of a bereft nation decides that, under any circumstances, it doesn't really need them at all.

GERALDINE PRINCE
Edinburgh

Sir: While I can sympathise with private grief and the need to keep the public's gaze away from a bereaved family, the Royal Family cannot escape its role as a public family. And, once again, they show us exactly why Princess Diana will be much missed. No public statements of support for the people of Britain. No contact. No reassuring glimpse of warmth or informality. No mutual understanding. No real relationship.

And this cold distance at a time when people in Britain are showing so much obvious public sympathy to support each other. The message the Royal Family sends out is that the curtains are shut, the doors are locked and the British public are on their own.

MARGARET KEETON
Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

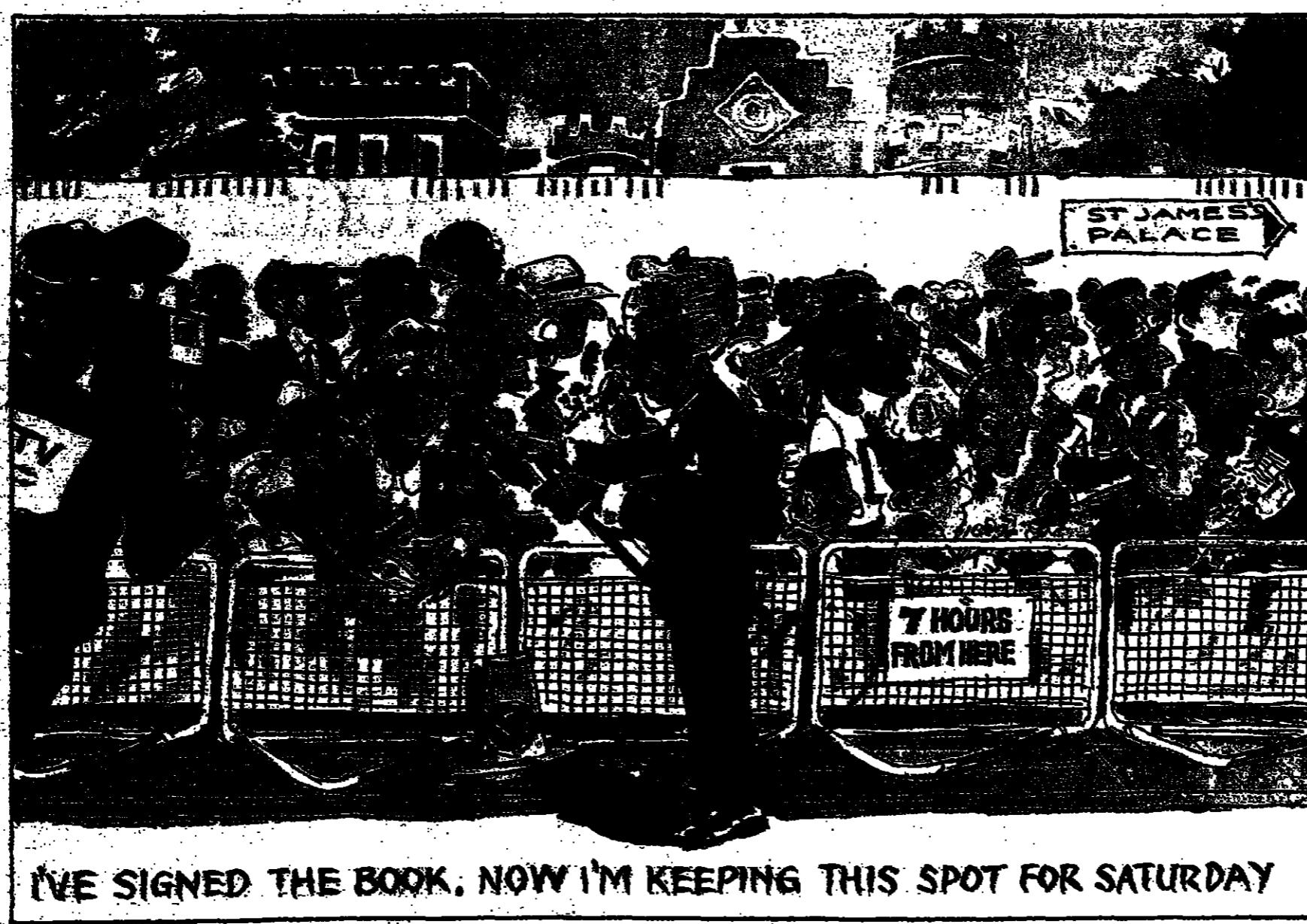
Sir: The Princess of Wales, mother of a possible future king, died on Sunday. It is now Wednesday and still there has been no word to her people from the present Queen.

Whether or not the Royal Family choose to preserve a rigid reserve – because it "dare not weep" – surely a simple personal message from the Queen transcends choice and is what should be expected of her as monarch and as a human being?

MARION DRAFFIN
Groomebridge, Kent

Sir: Polly Toynbee (1 September) is right to draw attention to the problem that has been created for the Palace, following the rapid canonisation of the late Princess. She goes on to raise the fear that Prince William might ponder which of his difficult parents to blame.

Should the Prince's mind turn that way, he will have to look higher than his father, a mere pawn in the game. The whole sorry tale came about because the Prince of Wales was not allowed a free choice of whom he could marry. First choice was royalty, second must be nothing less than filled. Virginity was a "hoped-for" extra. Despite the fact that his life is impossible to live in



I'VE SIGNED THE BOOK. NOW I'M KEEPING THIS SPOT FOR SATURDAY

anyone's terms, Charles was and remains a dutiful son and heir – just as William is expected to be.

The British are notoriously juvenile about matters sexual and if we could not accept 16 years ago that the Prince of Wales could make a free choice, perhaps we can now. If so, we will all have grown up a little bit.

SIMON ALLEN
Little Gaddesden, Hertfordshire

Sir: Diana, Princess of Wales, was in Paris of her own volition. At her own insistence, against the better judgment of the Palace, she had no official protection. She died as a result of being driven by a drunken chauffeur, an employee of her lover's family, into a concrete pillar at high speed.

As you say (leading article, 2 September), some people will hold the Royal Family in general, and Prince Charles in particular, in some way responsible for this tragic event. They are being irrational to the point of idiocy, and in the frenzy of bad taste which has surrounded Diana in both life and death, there are no reasonable or dignified steps the Royal Family can take to counteract such prejudice.

Your suggestion that Prince William's emotional competence must be in question as a result of his attending Eton would be cheap at the best of times. It is a vile thing to write when the boy must be feeling emotion enough at the death of his mother. You might be better employed questioning the emotional competence of the millions who did not go to Eton and are now wallowing in grief at the loss of someone who was no more to them than a media icon.

JOHN CAMPBELL
London N10

Sir: Diana was royal by marriage. That marriage was squashed emotionally by the future King, and terminated formally at the insistence of the present Queen; Diana herself has been comprehensively ridiculed by the Palace establishment – the Enemy.

It passes my understanding why the Palace is in any way involved with arrangements for her funeral. The family, including her sons, could be supported quite well by the Prime Minister and his staff at 10 Downing Street, representing her constituency – ordinary people.

JOHN DEKTER
Hythe, Hampshire

Sir: Your leader (2 September) and Michael Knowles' letter (2 September) were courageous in identifying where the buck stops in the search of the causes of Diana's death. Blame the unhygienic

of paparazzi, press and public as you wish, but it was ultimately the "Family" who destroyed the Princess of Wales.

When middle-aged ladies queue for eight hours to leave their personal tributes to Diana say to TV cameras, with evident contempt, that they wouldn't do this "for the rest of them", then the House of Windsor ought to be quaking. No wonder they hide at Balmoral.

Mrs MOIRA ROSS
Strathearn, Ross-shire

Sir: You criticise the response of the Windows to the most devastating of personal tragedies, the loss of a family member ("If only the royals could weep with the people" 3 September).

KEITH M HARRIS
Steeple Bumpstead, Suffolk

September). How distasteful would we as a nation regard a Hollywood-style display of weeping, if we knew the intention was to engender popularity and public sympathy.

Sorrow is a deeply personal experience and the dignified silence of those most deeply affected throws into sharp relief the theatrical excesses of the public grieving competition in which we all seem to be embroiled. A response motivated in part, I suspect, by private shame at the relentless pursuit of Diana's life which may have contributed to her death.

PHILIP E JAMES
Guildford, Surrey

Sir: Discussion about the apparent dysfunction of the Windsor family misses a more fundamental point.

To a democratic society all monarchy is dysfunctional.

The most useful legacy of Diana Windsor would be the establishment in this country of a republic. An open and creative project for that purpose, which embraced all the people, might provide a paradoxically appropriate memorial to the life of a "people's princess".

SPENCER HAGARD
Cambridge

Sir: In the St James's Palace queue on Monday, I discovered a dazzling many-sided coin in my change which I, for one, will always call "a Diana" – the new 50p.

PAUL WALTER
Newbury, Berkshire

How to beat the paparazzi

Sir: As long as there are members of the public who are curious to peer into the private lives of public figures, there will be money to be made by those who do the peering. A ban on invasion of privacy will not work.

Our problem is one of market failure. A scarce resource, namely the private image of a public figure, should not be owned by the photographer or by the publication which purchases it from him. True legal ownership should rest with the subject of the photograph.

Misuse of the image without the permission of the rightful owner would be a cause of legal action against the publication and the paparazzo to recover their wrongful profits.

If such a legal had been in place before last weekend, every tabloid which published photographs of Princess Diana and Dodi on their summer holidays would have been required to pay the resulting profits to them.

I do not think that it would take too fine a legal mind to distinguish between public events, such as speeches and hospital visits, and private events, such as a ski trip with one's children or a ride in a car with a friend.

GUY SPITER
New York

Sir: Your photographer, Brian Harris, is mistaken in trying to pass much of the blame on to the public

(* "Don't shoot the messenger: look to yourself", 1 September), for contributing to the death of the Princess of Wales.

The media, and the popular press in particular, is a very powerful tool, or weapon, that moulds and generates opinion as much as it feeds it. Even the press must now concede that there is an uncrossable border between the demand for pictures of the rich and famous, and crawling over the wreck of a crashed car, taking pictures of the dead and dying, the pictures of which, in this case, must surely be impounded by the French courts as the photographs were contravening the French "good samaritan" law of the very moment they took them?

MISS MARJORIE DAWSON
London E17

Sir: I find your headline of 2 September ("Killed by drunken driving, not fame") deeply offensive. The state of Diana's driver in no way exonerates the behaviour of the jacks that pursued her. These people, supposedly acting in the public's interest, conducted themselves like a frenzied pack of animals, acting solely in self-interest in the hope of benefiting from the huge pay-offs that newspapers and magazines offer.

You surely have to ask yourself what the driver was trying to avoid.

MARK ASHWELL
Maidenhead, Berkshire

Funeral song
Sir: There could be no finer funeral tribute to Diana, Princess of Wales than a specially modified "Candle in the Wind" sung by Elton John. PAUL WALTER
Newbury, Berkshire

Pointless death of a sad woman

Sir: Can we hope for a return to reality in the coverage of the death of Diana, Princess of Wales? A silly, self-absorbed, but basically well-intentioned woman has died, in a pointless accident. It happens all the time. In her life she lent her name and her face to some good causes; but not to the exclusion of endless holidays, hours in the gym and fabulous amounts of shopping. Legions do more in the relief of human suffering without a fraction of the adulation.

Her efforts hardly constitute the sainthood for which she currently seems destined.

For those thousands who are queuing up to sign books of condolence, there will be millions more who won't: who aren't struggling with a profound sense of loss, nor feeling that the landscape of their lives has been irrevocably changed; or suffering any other of the extreme emotions prescribed to "the public", by press pundits. Millions will never have bought a newspaper or magazine simply because it contained paparazzi snaps and will not, therefore be grappling with a covert sense of shared guilt in the sad woman's end.

But, many of them may be wondering why they live in a society which wants to apotheosis mediocrity, revel in its frailty, and then affect grief at its inevitable demise.

If Diana's "tragedy" is to mean anything, surely it must be that society cannot have figureheads for its national life on the terms currently demanded. Many of those now beating their breasts need to calm down, and ask themselves just exactly what it is they are crying about.

NIGEL WRIGHTSON
London SW2

Sir: There is a large constituency, possibly a majority, in this country for whom the death of Princess Diana is no more tragic than the premature death of any other human being. The way the media, and the BBC especially, have behaved puts me in mind of the old Soviet Union on the death of a party leader.

NEAL CHAMPION
Stamton, Gloucestershire

Flowers not guns

Sir: The Princess of Wales was campaigning against landmines, which makes the choice of a gun carriage as a vehicle for her coffin singularly inappropriate.

A flower-filled open carriage surrounded by the charities and children she supported would reflect the public mood in a more suitable way.

FELICITY BINYON
D'EMMA CREWE
Bel Crewe
Brancker, Norfolk

Beware idolatry
Sir: Isn't there a danger that the mass expression of shock and grief over Princess Diana's death is turning into idolatry? A news item showing pictures of the Madonna left at the Spencer family tomb left a feeling of unease.

One is reminded very strongly of the films shot at the time of the death and funeral of Eva Peron and the hysteria engendered.

Mourning and sympathy for Diana yes, sainthood no. Mrs J. WARMAN
Bromley, Kent

essay

The onset of globalisation poses a real threat to the protective, comfortable and ordered lifestyle that German citizens have long taken for granted, says Rupert Cornwell

For a snapshot of post-war German history, look no further than the long, narrow harbour of the great maritime city of Kiel. On the eastern side, beyond the HDW and Preussig shipyards, twisted concrete blocks jut from the water, remnants of U-Boat pens smashed by allied bombers during the *Götterdämmerung* of 1945. Exactly opposite, on the western bank, hundreds of private yachts, fruit of the wealth amassed during half a century of subsequent recovery, rock softly at anchor. But an even more revealing symbol passed almost unnoticed a few weeks ago. A giant floating tri-dock for ship repairs left for a permanent new home at the Suez Canal. An introduction, among many others, to a strange, half-understood beast called *Globalisierung*.

To Anglo-Saxon ears, "globalisation" has a bracing ring, promising access to the economic wonders of the world. For Germans, however, the term conveys only menace, of a new and unforgiving single world economy that takes no prisoners, where jobs and capital move unimpeded from country to country, threatening the very survival of the cosy, protective system under which they have prospered for 50 years. A fearful, mostly unspoken suspicion abounds, that a post-war era may be closing.

Outwardly little seems to have



Job seekers in Berlin – unemployment in Germany is double that in Britain, shredding old economic certainties

Photograph: AP

Fear stalks the Fatherland

changed. The Teutonic quest for a perfectly ordered life continues. Deutsche Bahn has installed waste bins on railway station platforms divided into four different-coloured sections, each for a different category of recyclable. In Bonn, the municipality has installed electronic signs along main streets informing drivers exactly how many places are available in nearby parking garages. Imperceptibly but relentlessly however, the new order advances. "We're at a watershed," says Horst Siebert, member of Chancellor Kohl's five-man Council of economic advisers and director of the influential World Economics Institute at Kiel University. "But neither the politicians nor the people understand what globalisation means for Germany."

Already though some old

certainties are in shreds. No longer is Germany top of the economics class. Italy – the same feeble Italy that Germans used to bail out with multi-billion-dollar loans secured by Banca d'Italia gold – now has a lower inflation rate. Britain, long Europe's basket case, is enjoying a sustained boom. The air is thick with warnings that the generous pensions, welfare and health care benefits its people take for granted are no longer affordable – yet unions are girding up for battle, to reduce the working week from 35 to 32 hours. The unemployment rate is almost 12 per cent, double that of Britain. And now the deutschmark itself, ultimate symbol of this most successful chapter of modern German history, is to disappear. Just like

Italians, Spaniards and Frenchmen, Germans will have to make do with the unknown, untrusted euro.

"What is the matter with our country?" asked Roman Herzog, the German President, in a now famous speech last spring after a visit to the Asian tigers on the Pacific rim. There all was dynamism, but "here the mood is overwhelmingly despondent ... a feeling of paralysis pervades our society". There was a loss of momentum, "an ossification and a failure to modernise ... an unbelievable mental depression".

Germany being Germany of course, nothing is ever simple. Could this not be merely a new outbreak of angst immemorial, in a people for whom no silver lining is complete without a leaden grey cloud? And indeed, in the short term, another hard German perennial may be about to blossom – an export-led upswing. Fuelled by a weaker currency, the monthly trade surplus in June of DM15bn (£4.5bn) was the largest in eight years. Growth in 1998 could be a very decent 3 per cent. And "Made in Germany" remains a byword for the excellence of a manufacturing sector which still comprises a third of the total economy (double its share in Britain).

But take the young London foreign exchange dealer in a radio interview this summer,

asked to explain yet another drop in the value of the mark against the pound. "The mark's a dying currency, isn't it?" he said, "and the markets kind of feel Germany has had it." Even a year ago, such words would have been unimaginable. Now foreign exchange dealers are not the fount of all wisdom. And even if they were, a dash of *Schadenfreude* is forgivable after endless German economic over-achieving. Nor does trust in Germany matter as it did when the country was the biggest prize in the Cold War and the likeliest battlefield for a hot one. But "Germany has had it"? As Europe seeks to forge a common currency, and prove it can compete with the US, the Asians and an emergent China, the last thing it needs is a creeping crisis in the continent's pivotal economy.

Health inspectors would have shut the place inside a week. Above all there is demography. Germany is growing old – so old that by 2010, under the country's company-financed social security system, employee contributions will have risen to an intolerable 50 per cent of wages if nothing is done. And that is before income tax.

But as the Fatherland slowly

burns, the politicians fiddle, unwilling to confront the interest groups, above all the elderly, who vote for them. The whiff of *fin de régime* is everywhere. Not perhaps quite the stench that permeated the last few years of Toryism, but inevitable when one man and one coalition have been in power for 15 years. Suddenly Chancellor Kohl looks tired, unable as he once would have been to stamp out squabbling within the centre-right coalition over pre-election reshuffle. Where though is the German Tony Blair? "We need new ideas, new people," even a prominent Kohl supporter admits, "but we just don't have them."

Only next spring will the SPD select its *Kanzlerkandidat*, but the current choice is not inspiring. Oskar Lafontaine, the left-winger who lost to Kohl in 1990, in the third of his four consecutive election victories since 1982, is yesterday's man, and for all his PR gifts, there are legitimate

doubts that the other leading contender, Lower Saxony's Minister-President Gerhard Schroeder, is tomorrow's. And Germany's predicament differs from Britain's in another way. In Britain, Margaret Thatcher did the necessary dirty work. Now it is Germany's turn to introduce similarly required market-oriented reform – but at the very moment when the "right-wing" government, more ideologically equipped to do so, seems about to leave the stage. Dare the Social Democrats offend their own supporters and administer the necessary medicine?

Inevitably, the already meagre public esteem for conventional politicians has tumbled, and simultaneously a grassroots activism buried deep in German historical tradition has re-emerged. In Bonn this week for instance, posters have been advertising a *Bürgersprechtag*, roughly a town hall meeting, on the theme of "How sick is our democracy?" The question is legitimate: German democracy is not among them (though perhaps it falls into the "long declining" category). Nor is the Netherlands, nor even Italy. The two the organisers had in mind were France, and above all Germany. Can it make the necessary adjustments, or will it be gently overtaken by economic old age? With the reassuring certainties of the Cold War just a memory, that is the new German question.

representatives from the federal Länder or states, designed to prevent an excessive concentration of power in the executive government. This summer though, the main claim to fame of an SPD-controlled Bundesrat was to block vitally needed tax reform endorsed by a majority in the elected Bundestag, or parliament. Unsurprisingly, calls for constitutional reform multiply. No one though believes there is the remotest chance of the two thirds majority to be secured to secure it, and equally unsurprisingly, many despair of the country's capacity to reform itself. Naturally the Germans have a word for it. *Reformstau*, or "reform jam".

So what happens next? Possibly, though the odds are against it, a fifth Kohl victory in 1998. It is astonishing but true that never in the history of the Federal Republic has an electorate voted out a sitting chancellor. Safe, solid and predictable is how Germans like it, and Helmut Kohl, never a politician to be underestimated, is the embodiment of these virtues. The opposition sets no one alight, and the economy might be growing fast enough to make inroads into unemployment. Some think he does not intend to serve a full term, staying on long enough to see the euro into being before resigning.

And with or without Kohl, all is not lost. Having identified the problem, surely a people that is among Europe's best educated and certainly its best organised, can solve it. If not, harsh market forces will. Already too, amid the squabbling, the coalition and the SPD are hinting at a readiness to strike a partial pre-election deal on tax and welfare reform. The government too may soon be over the hump in its aid for the old East Germany, presently running at DM150bn (£51bn), or 4 per cent of GDP a year – a burden which makes it mildly miraculous that Germany is within spitting distance of the 3 per cent Maastricht budget deficit guideline. Then there is the impending change of capital; replacement of Bonn's elevating provincial vapours with the metropolitan fizz of the Berliner *Luft* will surely lift national spirits (albeit, inevitably, foreign apprehensions about Germany as well). And if the current Thai debacle is anything to go by, maybe the Asian dragons aren't quite as terrifying as advertised.

But the world, and *Globalisierung*, will not wait. This summer, a stone's throw from Kiel harbour, Professor Siebert's institute held a convention on the subject of "Newly declining countries". For once Britain is not among them (though perhaps it falls into the "long declining" category). Nor is the Netherlands, nor even Italy. The two the organisers had in mind were France, and above all Germany. Can it make the necessary adjustments, or will it be gently overtaken by economic old age? With the reassuring certainties of the Cold War just a memory, that is the new German question.

The Impact of Fees

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For most of us, the River is another country

"You're probably sick of this by now," said our hostess as she served up soup to us one day in London last year.

"On the contrary," we said. "We don't eat soup that often. We're not at all sick of it. We quite like soup."

"Not soup," she said. "Not soup generally. This soup of Delia's."

"Yes – it's from her new book. We've had it all over the place at other people's houses this summer. I just thought you might be sick of it by now."

The soup was very good and we had never had it before, but then we live beyond the Delia Smith belt. Perhaps I should say that we live beyond the cook-book belt. But it happened to us again the other day, and outside London too.

"I hope you haven't had this too often before," said our host, as he served up a very strange concoction which looked like a model of a rutted ski slope but which turned out to be sea bass cooked under a crust of sea salt. "It's from *The River Café Cook Book*." For some reason

this stuck in my craw more than Delia Smith did. Well, Delia Smith is on television and therefore a national phenomenon, but the River Café is somewhere in London and therefore of no immediate interest to me.

I live on the edge of the West Country, which makes me a provincial, but people who live in London, and are therefore also provincials, never see themselves as being provincial. When people in London talk about the famous River Café (as even this paper did when serialising their rather cumbersome recipes) they assume we all know where it is. I can't think why.

If I were to refer to one of the many splendid restaurants in Bath or Bristol, I would have the decency to tend to explain its location, so why can't...?

Well, you get the point, and anyway time passes and no doubt the famous *River Café Cook Book* is moving out of fashion and some other book is moving in and London hosts and hostesses are apologising about some new repertoire of flavours and fads. Did I read somewhere that cooking with wood-fired ovens is the new thing? Or is Moroccan cooking the flavour

of the month? Something equally far-fetched. Poor old folk in London. They are no provincial they have no identity and have to clasp on to something to keep them afloat. They are more sensible in Morocco, I hope. I doubt that in the depths of Tangiers the smart housewives are saying to each other, "I hope you're not tired of this English soup...?" It's easy to be a snob, I realise that. I found myself doing a very snobbish thing the other day. I was standing in New York looking at an airline poster – American Airlines. I think – which was urging people to fly

to Birmingham, in England. And what do you think was the inducement they were using to get people in America to flock to Birmingham? It was contained in this couplet:

"Fly to the Castles
Without the Hassles!"

As an Englishman I found this instantly and doubly funny because a) "castles" and "hassles" don't rhyme in my part of England, b) I have never seen any castles in Birmingham. And yet I had no right to laugh, because it wasn't aimed at me. It was aimed at Americans, who would not only think it a good and proper rhyme but could easily find Birmingham a convenient jumping-off point to get to Ludlow Castle, Warwick Castle, Powis Castle, etc. (Mark you, I still think I was right to laugh at another American slogan, coined by a mineral water firm in Texas. The Texans were trying to counter the threat of smart imported European waters. They came up with the fighting slogan: "Kick Perrier/In The Derride!"

But it all depends where you stand. I heard an Irish comedian on *Loose Ends* the other day say that she had come to the Edinburgh Festival directly from Ireland – "Over from the mainland," she said. There was a split-second pause, then a lot of laughter from the Scottish audience. I think that joke would not have got such a laugh in London. In Scotland they share a perception with the Irish that things look different depending on where you are. In Scotland they know that a thunderstorm in London is headline material but a hurricane in Scotland will be lucky to be mentioned low down in the news. Of course, a hurricane in Ireland wouldn't be mentioned at all. Have you noticed on the British weather maps that Ireland doesn't exist? Look at Cetex weather maps. Opposite Liverpool there is a small rag of a place called Northern Ireland which is not attached to any other piece of land. It looks odd to us out here in the sticks. We provincials are willing to bet that the British weather map on Cetex was probably designed by some people down in London. Probably during a long lunch at the River Café. Wherever that is.

We will pray for the saint in a backless Versace dress

Muslims, too, have been deeply moved by Diana's death. Fuad Nahdi explains why

The most photographed woman in the world remains an enigma to most Muslims. As the world prepares to bury the people's princess, imams, scholars and ordinary Muslims in the street are struggling to ascertain what exactly her status and legacy were, and how best to remember her. The extent of her influence, from the Hindu Kush mountains to the deserts of Arabia and the fountains of the Taj Mahal, is hard to measure.

To cancerous children in Pakistan, she was a blonde angel who brought the gift of smiles and attention. To glamour publications in the Muslim languages, from Juris to Urdu, Malay and Arabic, she was the epitome of beauty, style and grace – and the secret to phenomenal circulation. To the princesses in the harems, she was the queen of fashion: her every dress her hairstyle, her walk – all were worthy of emulation. One of the better kept secrets of the Muslim monarchies are the scores of devoted Diana-lookalikes living in the royal palaces.

Condolences have poured in from the most unlikely quarters – from Afghan Taliban guerrillas, hardly known for their woman-friendliness or love of royalty, to hard-core Palestinian activists and Bosnian Muslim soldiers touched deeply by her anti-landmine stance. Besides beauty and charm, Diana's biggest asset was that she seemed to stand above politics or ideology.

Yet the ambiguities, the paradoxes embodied, loom large in the prism of the present Muslim consciousness.

Muslims warmed to her humanitarian acts, her genuine desire to generate compassion for those in need, but were warded off by a lifestyle that seemed incompatible with her stature. Many find it difficult to come to terms with a saint in backless Versace. Still, in a strange way the image of the princess was always somehow beyond religion and was, some could argue, Muslim-friendly, because her acts of charity encompassed individuals and causes from all parts of the worldwide Muslim community.

At the same time, however, British Muslims empathised with a different Diana. Many, themselves victims of another kind of alienation, felt they had a profound affinity with a woman marginalised by the Establishment. Diana wanted to be a royal in her own way, just as most Muslims in this country want to be British in their own way.

It is also with some bemusement that British Muslims watch the Janus-faced British media rush to canonise her before she is finally laid to rest on Saturday. For it was only days ago that every effort was made to run the Princess down, when her every mistake or misdemeanour (including having chosen a Muslim partner) was the cue for another bout of derision, when she was as near to being a saint as Baroness Thatcher.

Death may be the Great Leveler, but if anything, the passing away of Diana and Dodi has highlighted the different ways death can be handled: it can be an event of national cathar-



Fundamental message of sympathy: condolences from an Afghan leader

of mourning, to see of the first multi-faith memorial service held by the British state, so perhaps her passing will lead to a concretisation of the bridge-building process she liked to be a part of.

In a famous Prophetic narration, it is said that God chafes men with the words: "O son of Adam, I fell ill and you visited Me not." He will say: "O Lord, and how should I visit You when You are the Lord of the worlds?"

He will say: "Did you not know that My servant, So-and-so, had fallen ill? And you visited him not? Did you not know that he would have found Me with him?"

The thoughts and prayers of the entire Muslim community are at the moment with the living. Friday prayers all over the country this week will include invocations for patience, solace and guidance for Prince William and Harry, and for Prince Charles. For many a conscientious imam, an extra prayer will be for another to spring up and continue the good work undertaken by Diana, Princess of Wales. At the moment this seems difficult, for she is a "unique person". However, the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Or as the Holy Book puts it, "From Him we come, and to Him we return".

Fuad Nahdi is the editor of *Q-News*, a Muslim magazine.

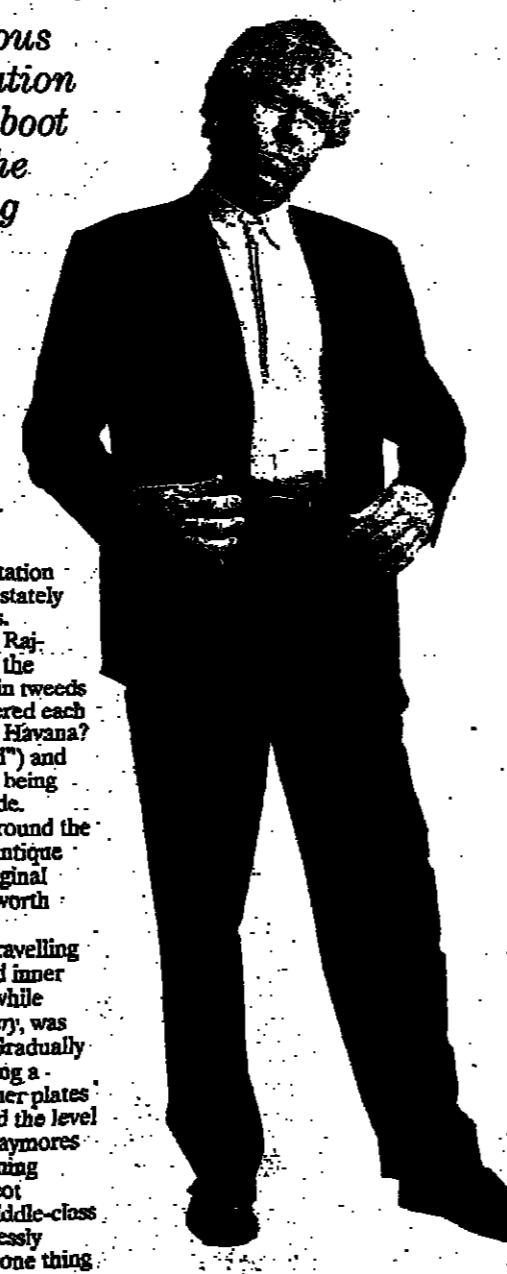
Yes, I had a pleasant holiday, before the news broke, much of it spent staring at the North Sea as it crashed and boomed around the freezing but exhilarated children, and traipsing along the shingle dunes as they slithered beneath my feet. Having only the other day stood on Bondi Beach – so obligingly wide, so sun-kissed, so deliciously custard-yellow, so free of pebbles and rocks and things that make your feet bleed – I wondered about the odd masochism of the British *en fée*, the way they take their pleasures so grimly. The yachters, the polo players, the winter footballers, the long-distance cyclists, the pot-holers and bog-snorkellers ... Brits, especially posh ones, are never happier than when they're doing something with grey skies overhead, grey water below, and lots of nasty breezes and bad light somewhere in the middle, as if enjoying their own resilience.

Of all the dubious pursuits the nation enjoys, the car boot sale remains the most mystifying. John Walsh

unloved domestic detritus. It was in the grounds of Glenham Hall, and the stallholders were – by invitation only – the owners of local stately homes and country estates.

It was quite a spectacle. Raj-style hammocks swayed in the breeze. Aristocratic types in tweeds sipped sherry at noon, offered each other smokes ("Care for a Havana? Only small ones, I'm afraid") and looked a little mortified at being briefly associated with Trade.

For an hour we drifted round the exhibits, wondering if an antique brass coal scuttle (with original shovel) could possibly be worth £300, no matter what its provenance. A silk-lined travelling vanity case with elasticated inner pockets, once a necessity while voyaging on the *Queen Mary*, was apparently a snip at £50. Gradually one's expectations of finding a complete set of Sévres dinner plates for a fiver dwindled. So did the level of trade. Elderly rusting claymores lay unclaimed on the grousing trestles. Sweat-stained Ascot binoculars were held to middle-class eyes and discarded almost as weak. By the time we left, one thing



The mood of the times is volatile, unprecedented and unpredictable. What on earth does all this mean, commentators and politicians are asking one another? Where does it go from here?

Out there on the streets, queuing through the night for eight hours, these are not the usual royal freaks who camp out for any wedding, jubilee or coronation. These are not readers of *Mayhem* who can quote every royal birthday. Many of them are surprised by their feelings. "I'm not much of a royalist but ..." "I was never interested in the royals, but ..." Even in newsrooms, hardened old cynics are swept off their feet. Is this just a strange example of global hysteria?

The Royal Family are plainly at a loss to read the meaning of all this. They are behaving as if a revolution is taking place outside the gates of Buckingham Palace. And they may be right. Hiding away in their Balmoral fastness, it is as if they dare not face the people, can't fathom the mood and they fear that it could turn nasty. For there is a growing groundswell of indignation out there. Where is the Queen? Why has she sent not one word of a message of regret, sorrow or condolence with anyone, not least her subjects? Why does no flag fly at half-mast over the Palace? Yes, the cognoscenti know that's because she is not in residence. But why is she not in residence? Dead bodies may not require company, but people are saying that Diana has been abandoned, left alone in her coffin with the mourners in the Mall.

She who stripped Diana of her HRH seems not to trust herself to the mercy of the masses, spilling out their hearts and flowers at her gates. Her life of frozen duty, stony faced and grim, may be admirable and full of noble self-sacrifice, but those "qualities" are out of fashion. Now people blame her for being a mother who put her duty above motherhood, keeping up appearances against all emotion, and they blame her for the miserable, comforted agonised here she is.

How are she and Prince Charles to compose their faces through this ordeal? Weeping looks like hypocrisy, but dry eyes look as if they feel less than their subjects. Already the unforgiving public blame the monarchy for Diana's pathetic love-lorn life. They took a young 19-year-old into their dysfunctional family, used her as brood mare and ejected her when she couldn't bear it.

Joining the monarchy is seen now by the people as something akin to marrying into the Adams family. Hardly surprising



The Windsors are behaving as if a revolution is taking place outside the gates of Buckingham Palace. And they may be right

ing they all divorce. Feminists at the time of the wedding wore badges proclaiming "Don't Do It". Now the people on the streets feel they were cynically manipulated with the pageantry of an empty "fairy-tale" marriage.

That may be brutally unfair. Diana was not a simple young thing. She was already deeply neurotic herself. The one thing she shared with Prince Charles disastrously, was a calamitous childhood. But she is dead and pitted while Charles has to stand out there and shoulder the blame. The Diana myth is that the monarchy killed her. And now they fear the monarchy will destroy her sons too. The monarchy is turning into the people's enemy.

That may all be complete nonsense, but that is what a lot of the people in the crowds are saying, loudly. It's what the

phone-ins are saying. Royal reality is whatever the people think it is. The myth is all. They have created the dead Diana in their image and they are busily remaking their view of the Royal Family in her shadow.

Royalty only exists as an emblem. It has no substance, no role, no objective reality. As Diana so naively put it, they have to be kings and queens of the people's hearts, or they are nothing. There were deeply unpopular monarchs in the past – but those days are gone. The monarchy, surrounded by European republics, is here only on the people's suffering now.

People are not much interested in dry issues of constitutional reform. There is no significant republican political project. But what if they take against the Royal Family as individuals? What if they dis-

like the heartless institution that destroys those who marry into it or are brought up in it? Out there in the streets, they may be turning against the monarchy itself.

Commentators have been asking what the monarchy can do to make itself loved again? How can the Queen make herself more like Diana, less like her frigid Christmas messages?

No number of Saatchis or Mandelsons can spin a new story for them. Can they send Charles out hugging lepers, kissing babies at Great Ormond Street, laughing with children and old folk, weeping for the rest of us, are we to live with the fairy tale turned nightmare forever? We are infantilised by our obsession with this meaningless family and their myths. Moving though it is to see the whole world in tears, there is also something gravely distressing about such extravagant outpouring of passion and emotion on so empty a vessel as the Royal Family. Not even Dunblane caused such a national paroxysm. The pathos of Diana's story is dreadfully sad and the sight of her bereft children will be terrible to behold at the funeral. But the kindest thing for them would be to set them free from our unreasonable, insatiable emotional demands on them. Charles must know that better than anyone.

But it is we too who need setting free. It is time to grow up, into the 21st century, time to put aside childish things. We cannot live forever expending so much attention and emotion on myths and phantasms of no significance. It demeans us. It demeans them. The anger of the people on the streets against the monarchy may be unfair, but perhaps at last it will break the spell and set us all free.

Europe-wide printer of glossy magazines from *Hello!* to the colour supplements reports a recent cacophony of phone calls from embarrassed editorial departments – most egregiously from *GQ* magazine, now edited by the wholesome James Brown (formerly of *Loaded*). *GQ's* new issue features a laddish fantasy about "shagging Di senseless" on the Virgin Island of Necker. How uproarious it must have seemed last week.

Diana's death is everywhere. People who would normally leave each other with a "cheers" and a wave of fingers now say, "You take care driving home, OK?" Taxi passengers, looking at the horizon advancing towards them, consider their mortality and sniff the air for alcohol fumes. Round every corner there are echoes, allusions, whispers and bathetic chimes of this extraordinary loss. Audiences at Rowan Atkinson's movie *Bean*, hoping to find something to cheer them up, hear instead Burt Reynolds say, "I know nothing about modern art – I can't tell Picasso from a car crash" and fince.

More professional worries are being felt by several publications when failing to forecast the events of August 31, had written obituaries or saucy pieces about the Princess and Dodi Al Fayed. Half a dozen of them appeared, by grisly coincidence, on the morning her death was reported. Diana's face adorned the *Sunday Times*'s "News Review" – not as a tribute but to illustrate a piece on the emptiness of her life by psychiatrist Oliver James. "I'm told she and Dodi are made for each other," wrote the charming Sir Bernard Ingham in the *Express* on Sunday, "both having more brass than brains."

And now a whole scramble of damage limitation has started. In attempts to spare the country's feelings, BBC producers have been coming through recordings of plays and stories, excising any mention of the word "princess". And uncounted monthly magazines, running their usual diet of Diana stories, have been rushing to make changes in their forthcoming issues. A friend at Watmough's, the huge

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Shareholders rebel over pay scheme □ Pentland investors uneasy at son's promotion

GEC faces revolt over executive options

Michael Harrison

GEC is facing a shareholder revolt at tomorrow's annual meeting over a controversial share option scheme under which a group of 250 top executives could receive eight times their salary as well as extra bonus shares.

At least two large institutional investors - Standard Life and National Provident Institution - have warned they will vote against the scheme and there were signs last night of the rebellion spreading.

A further four institutions - Norwich Union, Guardian

Royal Exchange, Equitable Life and Clerical Medical - are thought to be unhappy about the terms of the scheme.

The concern centres around the lack of sufficiently demanding performance targets attached to the options. Under one of the schemes the executives will be able to exercise so-called super-options if GEC does no more than achieve median performance in terms of total shareholder return compared with the rest of the FTSE 100 index.

This is the second year in a row that GEC has run into trouble over the issue of exec-

utive pay. When George Simpson, now Lord Simpson, took over as managing director last September, GEC was forced to tighten the performance targets triggering parts of his £10m pay package after protests from institutional shareholders.

Under guidelines issued by the Association of British Insurers, super-options are normally only exercisable if exceptional performance is achieved - which means being in the top quartile. In the case of GEC, 35 per cent of the options, which are worth four times salary, will be exercisable provided total shareholder re-

turn (increase in share price plus dividends) hits the median.

Guy Jubb of Standard Life said: "In my book that does not amount to exceptional performance. I hope the number of votes against the scheme and the level of abstentions will send a significant message to the GEC board."

There is also institutional unrest over another element of the remuneration package which allows GEC to give the executives bonus-matching shares equivalent to 25 per cent of the annual performance bonus provided half that sum is taken in the form of ordinary

shares. The award of the bonus shares does not depend on any performance targets being met.

Yvette Hood of NPI said it had voted against both the super-options scheme and the matching bonus scheme because neither met ABI guidelines. "The performance criteria that trigger the options awards are not high enough and we are unhappy about that."

Another scheme entitles the executives to exercise share options again worth four times salary provided earnings per share growth exceeds the RPI by 6 per cent over a three-year period. This scheme is not be-

ing objected to but because of the way GEC is seeking shareholder approval for all the schemes under one composite motion, many institutions will be obliged to vote against it.

Richard Regan, head of investment affairs at the ABI, said: "We want to see credibility restored in these long-term incentive schemes and the only way to do that is to ensure they have appropriate and demanding targets. GEC's scheme would appear not to be consistent with the spirit of our guidelines."

The indications last night were that the vote would be close although the GEC camp ap-

peared to be confident that it had secured the support of enough large shareholders to carry the day. However, opposition from a significant minority of large shareholders is certain to cause embarrassment for the group and may lead it to amend the performance targets attached to the schemes in future.

Lord Simpson and the board may also come under fire over the level of pay awards last year. The group's annual report and accounts show that Lord Simpson received £1.141 million for seven months work last year, including a discretionary bonus of £160,000.

Row over roles halts Burford MEPC merger

Tom Stevenson
Financial Editor

Merger talks between Burford and MEPC were halted yesterday after the two property companies failed to agree on roles for their senior directors. The failure of the negotiations is an embarrassment for MEPC, which has come under pressure from its large shareholders to improve its performance or link with a stronger partner.

Any deal between the two companies would have created a property investment and development business with assets worth around £4bn. It would have been the most significant tie-up in a sector which analysts believe needs consolidation.

It is understood Burford, one of the sector's fastest growing companies, approached MEPC early in the summer, but the larger company only showed an interest after Burford's shares fell back from a high this year of 159p to a recent low of 111p.

Talks are thought to have foundered because Burford was only interested in an effective takeover that would have seen its chairman Nigel Wray and chief executive Nick Leslau take top jobs in the enlarged group. This was unacceptable to MEPC, which is headed by James Tuckey, its chief executive, and Lord Blakemore, chairman. After it was announced the talks had come to nothing, Burford's shares fell 4p to 117p. MEPC closed 1.5p lower at 467.5p.

MEPC has come under pressure to rationalise its underperforming portfolio and withdraw from overseas operations since over-extending itself during the late 1980s property boom. Its net asset value has fallen from 475p at the end of 1994 to 450p at the end of last year and its dividend has been flat since the recession.

Recently MEPC rebuffed a takeover approach by Hammerson. It has also been linked with other potential predators, including British Land.

Stung by Hammerson's hostile approach, MEPC has attempted to move on to the front foot itself, appointing a new corporate development director, Robert Ware, to seek out deals. With £100m of cash, it is thought to be looking for acquisitions of up to £500m.

Burford, with a market capitalisation of just over £500m, has been an impressive investment over the past four years, although problems with Trocadero have put its shares into reverse in recent months.

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Concern as sportswear boss gives son top job

Sameena Ahmad

Stephen Rubin, chairman and chief executive of Pentland, the Speedo and Berghaus sportswear group, laid himself open to charges of nepotism yesterday when he appointed his 32-year-old son as chief executive.

Mr Rubin will split his roles next year but has risked the ire of institutional investors and corporate governance experts with the promotion of his son, Andrew.

The move follows similar controversial appointments at Next, where chairman Lord Wolfson appointed his 29-year-old son Simon as a director of the FTSE 100 company earlier this year. Lord Hanson also made his young son Robert a director of the conglomerate before it was demerged.

Andrew Rubin, a Harvard business school graduate, has been with Pentland as marketing director since 1995. Stephen Rubin, 59, and who owns 56 per cent of Pentland's shares, himself worked for his father at Pentland, joining the company when he was 21.

In another move which raised concerns about the independence of Pentland's non-executive directors, the company has appointed John Quelch to its non-executive board. Mr Quelch was a professor at Harvard and a former non-executive director of Reebok, the footwear business which Pentland bought in 1981 for £50,000 and sold for £400m 10 years later.

Mr Quelch joins Robert Shepherd, now a non-executive director but previously an executive on Pentland's board between 1972 and 1992.

"They are running this company like it is a private business

Keeping it in the family: How the son also rose at Next and Hanson

Simon Wolfson

He was appointed to the board of Next by his father, Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale, in February this year at the age of 29.

It was a controversial appointment that made him the youngest director of a FTSE 100 company. He joined Next in 1991 when he was 23.

His first job was as sales manager of Next Retail, which then had 312 stores. When Next combined the retail division with the mail order division, Next Direct, in 1993, he became sales and marketing director of the Next brand.

Next's institutional investors and City analysts expressed concern at the new appointment, saying it "left a bad odour" and could backfire.

and ignoring the shareholders," complained one institution, pointing out that Pentland shares have underperformed the market by more than 40 per cent since it floated in 1989.

Manifest, the corporate governance body, was concerned about the news. Adam Kay of Manifest said: "Though this is technically a split between the chairman and chief executive roles, shareholders will note the obvious familial link. If I were a shareholder I would want to see a nomination committee that is the chairman's son."

Though a spokesman for Mercury Asset Management confirmed that Pentland had sought and received approval for the appointment, another leading institution denied that it had granted tacit approval: "That is misleading. We have had discussions and we have been told about it."

Stephen Rubin defended the appointment: "We are a family business, but it is important to say that we did get full approval from our shareholders and our non-executive directors."

Comment, page 21

Robert Hanson

Lord Hanson was unafraid of accusations of nepotism, appointing his Eton and Oxford-educated, polo-playing son Robert to the industrial conglomerate's board in 1992 at the age of 31. The appointment, after years of speculation about the group's succession, sent Hanson's shares into reverse.

Lord Hanson also gave a board position to his niece's husband, Christopher Collins. Robert, whose previous career included a spell at the merchant bank NM Rothschild, was put in charge of Hanson's search for expansion opportunities in the Far East. In 1995, he became corporate development director, replacing Mr Collins who moved up to become vice-chairman. He remains in the same post at the Hanson rump following the recent demerger.



Stephen Rubin: Worked for his father at Pentland, joining the company when he was 21

Shareholders press Ladbroke to bid for Capital Corporation

Sameena Ahmad

Institutional investors in Capital Corporation, the controversial London casino company, have approached Ladbroke, the gaming group, in the last three weeks to pressure the company to bid for Capital. It is understood Ladbroke suggested to the institutions an indicative bid of £150m to £160m. Capital yesterday reported flat half-year operating profits to £17m after £7m of costs associated with the blocked bid from London Clubs. Its shares rose 5.5p to 163.5p yesterday, valuing the company at £166m.

Capital, which owns the Mayfair Crocadero and Colony club casinos, was keen to play down recent controversy which has culminated in the company issuing a writ against three former

executives. Capital is under a Stock Exchange investigation following news that Garry Nessitt, former chairman and now a non-executive director, removed a profit warning from the group's draft interim results announcement last September, despite arguments that doing so could create a false market.

Alan Hearn, Capital's recently appointed chief executive, said: "We are in good shape. These results demonstrate that we have drawn a line under this issue. We have the new management in place and we have been fully audited on three occasions."

Ernest Sharp, chairman, hit out at the accusations from former executives including Kenneth Thompson, who resigned as chief executive last year, of irregularities within

the company. The allegations surround gaming scams, irregularities in food and drink procurement and failure of Mr Hearn and Mr Nessitt to notify the board of a bid offer from Ogdens, the US gaming group, made last September.

These are all lies, all absolute rubbish. Why should we be in the dock answering these questions?" Mr Sharp said. Mr Sharp said Ogdens had approached Mr Thompson individually about a possible bid, but Mr Thompson failed to pass on that information for "about six months". Mr Sharp said the group had no intention of asking Mr Nessitt to leave or of taking the company private.

Capital also announced the acquisition of the downmarket Cromwell Mint casino in Knightsbridge for £23m cash.

Former Clyde directors return with rescue deal for Pittencriff

Chris Godsmark

Business Correspondent

The former top management of Clyde Petroleum, which lost control after the closely fought £495m takeover bid by Gulf Canada earlier this year, returned to the oil business yesterday with a deal to rescue Pittencriff Resources, the troubled exploration and production company.

The four ex-Clyde executives, including Malcolm Gourlay and Roy Franklin, former chairman and group managing director, said they planned to use Pittencriff to "create a new Clyde" aiming to triple the company's value to up to £150m in two years.

"We've had a nice summer improving our golf handicaps and now it's time to get back to

business," Mr Franklin said. If the new management fulfils its target, it will receive up to 1 million shares through a three-year incentive scheme.

It also emerged yesterday that Terry Heneghan, Pittencriff's former chief executive who resigned in June, walked away with a £450,000 pay-off, despite the company's financial problems.

His three-year rolling contract, with a £150,000 basic annual salary, was in stark contrast to the Greenbury proposals on executive pay, which recommended contracts of no more than two years.

Another two Pittencriff directors resigned yesterday, Michael Munro, chairman, and Gerald Hobson, a non-executive director. John Brown, the finance director, is to stay on.

Pittencriff's leading City in-

Higher interest rates cool the economy down

Diane Coyle

Economics Editor

"There is quite a bit of flux in the outlook for interest rates. This sort of volatility is not uncommon when the markets have had a good run," said James Barty, an economist at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell.

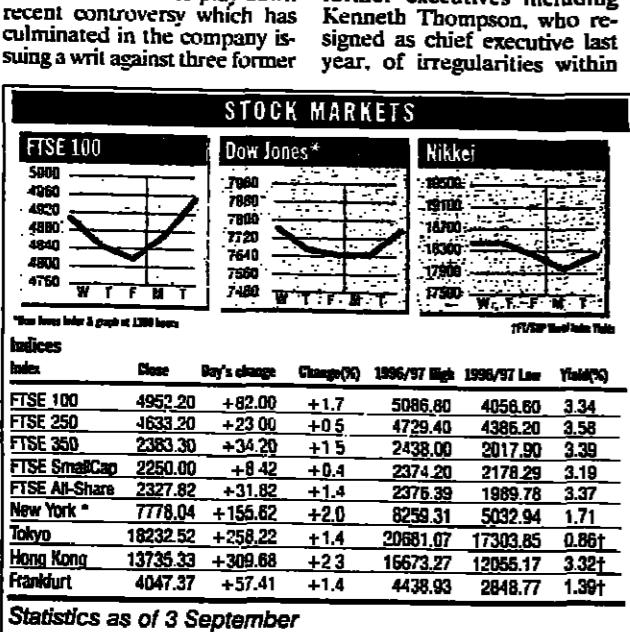
A growing number of analysts fear Wall Street in particular is overdue for a sharp correction after enormous gains this year.

Yesterday's survey suggested that the four recent UK interest rate increases have started to cool the most overheated sector of the British economy.

Most City analysts leave open the possibility that the Bank of England will take more action later in the year, however. "This week's figures suggest the increases we've had already are starting to have the required impact. That's encouraging, but it doesn't mean the Bank can leave the job on rates half finished," said David Hillier at BZW.

The monthly survey of purchasing managers in services showed that growth in August remained strong, but less strong than the previous month. The index of business activity declined from an uncomfortable 62.1 in July to 58.6. Businesses blamed higher interest rates and the strong pound.

The Dow Jones index was slightly lower by mid-morning at 3,875.6, with traders nervous about what key figures on jobs and earnings due on Friday will imply for US interest rates. Many predicted a volatile run up to their publication.





COMMENT

Getting two sides to agree on who should take the top jobs is often the biggest challenge in merger negotiations, but never more so than in the property world, where businesses are more or less openly run more for the benefit of their managers than their owners

Clash of egos looks likely in property bid failure

On the face of it, it was an obvious move for MEPC to make – a takeover bid for its smaller rival, Burford. Given the right of its life after a recent hostile approach from Hammoner, the perennially underperforming MEPC has attempted to move to the front foot by promising its increasingly restive shareholders great things from a £500m war chest.

After a poor run this year, that is almost exactly Burford's market value, making now as good a time as any for MEPC to strike. With the Freeman brothers willing to cash in their chips in the sector's other shooting star, Argent, it was plainly worth a call to Burford's founders, Nigel Wray and Nick Lesian, to test the water.

It was always more likely than not, however, that the talkers would founder. Even the business case for putting the two companies together was questionable. MEPC has been able to squeeze few efficiency gains out of the austere run Burford, whose entrepreneurial management skills would probably be wasted on the larger company's disparate collection of properties.

The business logic was one obstacle, but it was probably a lesser one than the deepening clash of egos that tends to characterise any meeting of property folk. Getting two sides to agree on who should take the top jobs is often the biggest challenge in merger negotiations, but never more so than in the property world, where businesses are more or less openly run more for the benefit of their managers than their owners.

There are more than 140 companies quoted in the property sector, of which 37 are valued at less than £10m. These are businesses whose assets amount to little more than the value of a decent-sized terrace in one of London's better suburbs and which are no more complex than that to run.

That these uncomplicated little businesses have highly paid boards, enjoying smart head offices and smarter Mayfair lunches, makes no economic sense. In any other industry, such an inefficient state of affairs would have been resolved long ago by a rash of takeovers. Turkeys, though, do not vote for Christmas and until investors kick up more of a stink, there is little prospect of the sector's very long tail shortening to a more reasonable length.

Butlins move could be money down the drain

What on earth do you do with a tired old brand like Butlins? This is a business with a special place in British social history. Whether it's for Hi Di Hi, losing your virginity, red coats, or just never having been to one, there are few adults for whom the name means nothing. Unfortunately, instant brand recognition is not the only ingredient in business success, and today Butlins stands not for the time or your life, but for unemployment, social deprivation, tackiness and vulgarity.

Is it really possible to reinvent for the 21st

century a holiday concept born so unambiguously out of post-war austerity? Plainly even Andrew Teare, chief executive of the company's parent, Rank Group, only partly believes so. Under ambitious investment plans for the five Butlins holiday camps that remain, two of them are to lose the Butlins name entirely. Nonetheless, the £129m planned investment in the other three is by any standards a massive gamble.

Nobody doubts that there is anything but a huge market out there for the inexpensive British family holiday, but is a mixture of Haagen-Dazs Cafes, Burger Kings, Enid Blyton and Harry Ramsden fish and chips, all under "an impressive new weatherproof canopy structure", really going to cater for it? Rank is confident the whole thing will meet its 15 per cent return on capital benchmark, but the City can hardly be blamed for scepticism.

This could as easily be money down the drain as well invested and the move has rather highlighted growing doubts about what Mr Teare, now 18 months into the job, is trying to do with Rank. Spraying money around on the group's hotch potch of unrelated and unfocused leisure activities in the hope that one or some of them might come good is not much of a strategy. If he is to survive, he needs to be much clearer about what links this disparate rag bag of declining brands and why anyone would want to spend good money on trying to revive them. Mr Teare still has a mountain to climb persuading the City that Rank has a vibrant future ahead of it. Ho ho ho!

Pentland, this is your chairman speaking

Message to outside shareholders in Pentland Group from your chairman, Stephen Rubin.

"First the good news. I am acutely aware that since my spectacular success with Reebok in the 1980s, our share price has gone nowhere. I'm told that we've underperformed the rest of the market by 40 per cent over the 1990s despite my best endeavours to build a new family of sports and leisure brands post the Reebok disposal. I'm not admitting failure, you understand, but I have to confess that we are not yet another Nike. So it is with great sadness and regret that I have decided to do the Cadbury correct thing and split the role of chairman and chief executive. I've never gone along with this kind of nonsense myself but I can understand why you blighters think it right and proper in publicly quoted companies."

"Now the bad news. Up yours! The new chief executive is to be my son, Andrew. No, seriously, I'm really going to appoint him, but I did check it out with some leading institutions like the FCA and they said it was perfectly all right. OK, they didn't really say quite that but they did concede that since my family is still the majority shareholder in Pentland, there's not a lot they can do about it. I know this is bound to raise eyebrows in the City but I've never made any pretence that this is anything but a family company.

Anyway, Andrew is a Harvard MBA, so what more could you want?"

"I have absolutely no doubt that he is the right man for the job. It is entirely fortuitous that he just happens to be my son as well. You'll see. I'll be entirely vindicated within a few years. And if you don't like it, that's your lookout. You are in a minority, after all."

Make things too tough and BA will walk

After a break for the summer holidays, 2,000 staff have been resumed in the war of words over British Airways' planned alliance with American Airlines. Delta Air Lines, which incidentally got its fingers badly burnt attempting a similar tie-up with Virgin Atlantic, wants its two rivals to surrender as many as 50 round trips a day from Heathrow as the price for regulatory approval.

Plans might fly, as they say, but since the outcome of this particular dogfight does not look like being settled until well into the autumn, Delta has every incentive to maintain maximum pressure on the alliance partners and the competition authorities on either side of the Atlantic. Where the tactic risks coming unstuck is that if the authorities are encouraged to take too tough a line, BA and American will simply walk away. In that case there will be no open skies agreement either and no opening up of fortress Heathrow, the real goal for Delta and others.

Delta says BA-AA must lose 50 flights

Michael Harrison

Delta Air Lines of the US, one of the leading opponents of the British Airways-American Airlines alliance, said yesterday that the tie-up should only be allowed to go ahead if the two carriers surrendered 50 round trips from Heathrow a day.

This is double the number of slots that competition authorities in Washington and Brussels have said should be relinquished, and four times the number that the Office of Fair Trading says BA and American should be required to give up.

The tough line being taken by Delta, the biggest airline in the world based on passengers carried, is designed to put extra pressure on regulatory authorities on both sides of the Atlantic as the deadline looms for a final decision on the long-delayed alliance.

The OFT recommended that BA and American relinquish 168 slots at Heathrow a week as the condition for allowing the alliance to proceed. The European Competition Commissioner, Karel Van Miert and the US General Office of Accounting, which reports to Congress, both recommended that 350 slots be surrendered.

But Delta said yesterday that between 700 and 800 slots should be given up and redistributed to rival carriers if real competition were to be preserved following the launch of the alliance.

Approval for the BA-American tie-up will pave the way for an open skies agreement between London and Washington, liberalising air services across the Atlantic by permitting any US carrier into Heathrow.

Stephen Egli, Delta's newly appointed vice-president for

the Atlantic and Pacific, said that releasing 168 slots would only allow proper competition to take place on one route – Heathrow to New York's JFK airport – where the combination of BA and American would otherwise dominate with 13 non-stop flight a day.

Mr Egli said that if there were to be real competition on the four, or give other routes where BA and American would have a stranglehold, then as many as 800 slots would need to be freed up: "We recognise that is a tremendous number of slots but it needs to be done if we are not to allow a monopoly."

As an alternative, he added, would be higher price and less choice because other carriers would simply drop out of the routes as they would not be able to compete on equal terms.

A BA spokesman said of Delta's demand: "There are some

absurd suggestions out there but this one takes the biscuit. All our competitors have rallied against the alliance because they have their own agendas to pursue."

The BA team working on the alliance planning meets today to take stock of the situation and continue preparing the airline's formal response to Mr Van Miert. Bob Ayling has set an effective deadline of November for approval for the alliance otherwise the two carriers will not be able to plan to their summer schedule properly. The bi-annual slot scheduling conference, attended by all the world's airlines, takes place in Paris on 20 November, between 12-20 November, to allocate slots for all airports for next summer.

BA's approval is finally granted it will have taken BA and American two years from the date of their original announcement to get the alliance airborne.

Germany to sell £1.7bn stake in Lufthansa

IImre Karacs
Bonn

The German government yesterday unveiled plans to sell its remaining 35.7 per cent stake in the national airline Lufthansa.

At current prices, the 140 million publicly owned shares are estimated to fetch about DM5bn (£1.7bn), making the Lufthansa offering the second biggest sell-off after last year's flotation of Deutsche Telekom.

As the government wants many small investors to buy into the world's fourth biggest airline, "special incentives will be provided to encourage private investors to take up the offer," announced Theo Waigel, the Finance Minister.

The size of the discount is yet to be decided, but private investors who place their orders early are promised preferential allotments.

Ahead of the flotation on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange

on 13 October, the government is organising "road shows" through Germany, the rest of Europe and the US.

The initial price, based on the price of Lufthansa shares already being traded, will be fixed between 29 September and 10 October. The offer price will be announced during the weekend of 11-12 October.

Lufthansa shares were first listed in 1966, and the government held 15.7 per cent of its holding in 1994. With increased competition in the air, it was felt that only a private concern could survive. On 1 April this year, the skies over the European Union were thrown open to European competition.

State-owned airlines are an anachronism in a liberalised air transport market,

said Matthias Wissmann, Minister of Transport. "As competition becomes increasingly fierce throughout the world, a successful airline needs as much entrepreneurial scope as possible."

Lufthansa last week announced the best interim results in the company's history. Half year sales reached DM10.7bn, up 9.1 per cent from the same period last year, and pre-tax profit tripled to DM397m.

Lufthansa shares were trading at DM36.50 yesterday, up 1.7 per cent.

The German government expects to be DM4bn richer from the proceeds. Although Mr Waigel cannot use the income to bring the government deficit under the Maastricht threshold of 3 per cent, the income will cut the total public debt burden.

The subsidy led to angry protests to the European Commission by British Airways. The EC subsequently approved the package, partly on condition that the government eventually privatised the carrier.

Mr Gayssot had pledged that he would not be "minister of privatisations" after his appointment, but in recent weeks speculation had mounted that

the cash-strapped government was prepared to compromise. Mr Gayssot had said on Tuesday that his plan did not "pre-suppose either privatisation or maintenance of the state's quo".

Mr Blanc is credited with leaving the job after Bernard Pons, the former transport minister, said he wanted Air France to buy only Airbus jets.

The airline insisted it needed Boeing 777s. Another resignation threat came when pilots considered strike action over proposals to change their salary structure.

Mr Blanc's relations with the previous conservative administration were apparently no better than with the socialists. He refused to deal with Mr Pons after his appointment in 1993, preferring to speak only to Alan Juppé, then the prime minister.

However, this is not the first time the idiosyncratic Mr Blanc

Blanc threatens to quit – again

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Fresh turmoil engulfed the industrial policy of the new French socialist government yesterday after Christian Blanc, chairman of Air France, threatened to resign if the airline's privatisation was abandoned.

Jean-Claude Gayssot, the communist transport minister, intervened to urge Mr Blanc to stay on in the post, but effectively ruled out selling a majority stake in Air France. "The state must keep a majority even if an opening up of the capital is not ruled out," the ministry said.

The left-wing coalition, which won a surprise election victory in May, immediately put on hold the privatisation plans of the

outgoing conservative regime. They included the sale of Aerospatiale, the aerospace giant and its merger with Dassault, along with the sell-off of France Telecom, which was in its advanced stages.

The latest row exploded after Mr Blanc told a French radio station that if the government decided not to proceed with the sell-off it would "constitute a breach of contract". Air France sources said yesterday Mr Blanc was insisting the government sold a majority stake in the airline, though he was flexible about when and how it was done.

Mr Gayssot had pledged that he would not be "minister of privatisations" after his appointment, but in recent weeks speculation had mounted that

Jubilee Line faces extra £216m bill

Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

Contractors working on London Underground's £2.6bn flagship Jubilee Line Extension (JLE) are demanding extra payments worth up to 150 per cent of the original costings, according to sources close to the project.

Three big claims will add an extra £216m to the budget, if London Underground agrees to pay out. A tunnelling project at London Bridge, run by Costain and Taylor Woodrow, is expected to top £150m – double its original value.

Two south London station projects, at Southwark and Bermondsey, will add £20m to the total project bill and builder Drake and Scull are looking to charge Tube bosses £100m for a project originally priced at £40m.

The cost of the JLE has already risen from the original £1.9bn estimate because of changes to tunnelling techniques following the collapse of the Heathrow rail link tunnel and additional work needed at the Westminster and Canary Wharf stations. Ministers have made it clear that no more money is available.

According to *Contract Journal*, a trade magazine, builders blame frequent design changes, poor co-ordination and management "adversarial and management style" for the size of the claims.

One contract to build part of the new Westminster station has already seen London Underground and contractors Balfour Beatty/Ametec clash over the cost over-runs. One source said the problem was that money was no longer being paid regularly.

"JLE management is questioning every claim the contractors make in minute detail," he said.

The poor relations have threatened to delay the project, set to start running in September 1998. London Underground will face penalties if Canary Wharf is not open on time. Builders are offering close to £1,000 a week in bonuses and overtime payments to key workers under pressure from London Underground managers to avoid further delays.

The extension is considered the most important rail project in Europe, linking the site of the Millennium Dome to the centre of the capital and putting Canary Wharf just 12 minutes from Waterloo.

London Underground says the service will begin as planned. Executives point out

that trains are being run on the Stratford to North Greenwich loop to evaluate the cab systems and signalling.

Mike Smith, the JLE's project manager, said there was enough slack in the budget to cover all the claims.

The £2.6bn will account for all the contractors' costs. With construction projects there are always claims that are far higher than contractors expect to get. And I would say that there is an element of that with these reports."

A spokesman for London Underground said: "With a project of this scope and complexity there are bound to be claims from contractors. Some have already been resolved and others are being submitted. Those that are being submitted are being examined to see whether they are justified or not."

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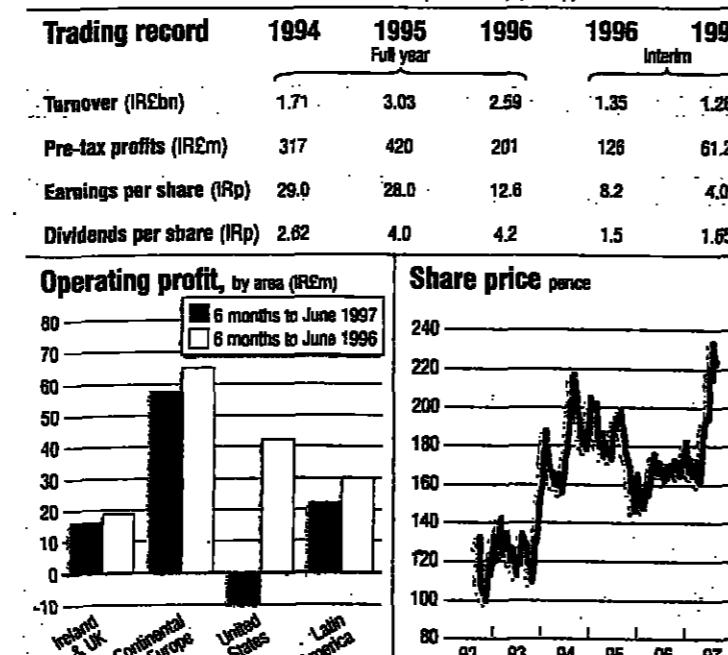
business

Paper prices cut Smurfit's profits

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN
EDITED BY MAGNUS GRIMOND

Jefferson Smurfit: At a glance

Market value: £2.32bn, share price 10.5p (+4.5p)



Jefferson Smurfit, the world's largest maker of cardboard boxes, has been through the mill (so to speak) over the past two years or so. It is less than 15 months since the paper group was hauling its 1995 profits as the biggest ever made by an Irish company, but even then it was recognising that the seeds of its own nemesis were being sown in the form of collapsing prices in an over-supplied market.

At their bottom earlier this year, prices for boxes had fallen close to a fifth since the beginning of 1996, while paper was down by as much as 25 or 30 per cent. The pain of that is reflected in Smurfit's pre-tax profits to June, which collapsed by 51 per cent to £61.2m, but the group is now confident that the worst is over and has duly hoisted the half-way dividend by 10 per cent to 1.65p.

Certainly, Kraftliner and recycled paper grades, two key raw materials for Smurfit, have risen by 9 and 15 per cent respectively since earlier this year. The group is confident that a planned 8 per cent rise in European prices will stick after it is implemented at the beginning of October. It is also working hard to put its own house in order, with cost savings already running proportionately well ahead of the £35m promised earlier this year.

However, all this will be as caught unless the industry shows more discipline than it has in the past. The last upswing in prices to 1995 prompted a capacity binge amounting to around twice the normal demand growth, according to Smurfit. As ever, the timing proved disastrously wrong and much of it has come on stream since prices peaked.

The Irish group has been a model of restraint in all this, but in a triumph of hope over experience, it is now hoping that big US rivals like Georgia Pacific and International Paper mean what they say when they announce that future capital expenditure will only match depreciation.

This optimism is only part of what has been driving Smurfit's share price, which has leapt from around 160p in April to 210.5p, up 4.5p yesterday. The main propellant has been the soaring share price of the 46 per cent-owned US associate, Jefferson Smurfit Corporation, which has risen from \$1.3 to around \$1.50 since the start of the year on takeover hopes.

Expectations that the Irish group will bid for the rest of JSC look wide of the mark, given the price likely to be extracted by Morgan Stanley, the other big shareholder. However, the group revealed that it is looking at the possibility of a merger between JSC and another US paper group, which would help tidy up a messy situation.

Plenty of riches in Wilson's land bank

Wilson Connolly, the building group, was looking ill-positioned in the housing market 18 months ago. A bias towards the bottom end of the spectrum at a time when first-time buyers were still not in evidence meant the company had to discount heavily to keep up volumes.

But the picture has changed entirely since the housing market started picking up. Although the group shifted only 1,725 houses in the six months to June, 104 fewer than last time, they were sold at much better margins, with the average selling price rising from £61,000 to £64,400. That fuelled a 30 per cent increase in profits to £10.4m, with housing margins jumping from 5.9 to 8.3 per cent.

Although full-year completions at around 4,200 are unlikely to be much different from 1996, the improving momentum of the first half is set to continue.

At close to five years' sales, the land bank is one of the longest in the industry, allowing Wilson to steadily increase the number of its operative sites and be flexible if land costs spiral out of control. Currently, there is little sign of that, with selling prices moving up in line with costs.

Management have done a good job at shifting Wilson out of its ghetto in the one- and two-bedroom house market, halving that proportion of the business to under 30 per cent of sales in less than five years. At the same time, the group has broadened its geographic coverage and gradually diversified its development activities.

But the jewels lie within the strategic land portfolio. Wilson hit the jackpot with its 900 acres near Dunfermline in Fife, selling the site for the new £2.6bn Hyundai microchip plant and winning permission for 3,200 homes which will have a plot cost of just 8 per cent of average sales prices. Dunfermline chipped in a land sale profit of around £500,000 in the first

half and there could be three times as much again in the second if a site sale to Tesco, likely to be worth around £9m, goes through. Over 20 years, the project could produce £300m of gross sales at very attractive margins, and Wilson has another potential gem at its Broadway site near Exeter.

Full-year profits of £34.5m would put the shares, down 0.5p at 173.5p, on a forward multiple of 15. Attractive.

Emap titles boost Johnston Press

Investors in Johnston Press, the acquisitive Edinburgh-based regional paper group, have every excuse for looking smug, given the company's share price performance. The shares have risen 27 per cent in three months, as market worries over the ability of advertising revenue to weather this year's interest rate rises evaporated.

Yesterday the shares rose a further 6p to a new 12-month high of 222.5p, as the company revealed pre-tax profits in the first half to June of £19.4m, up from £12.6m before. The increase partly reflected the full impact of the £20m takeover of Emap's regional newspaper titles early last year, which doubled Johnston's size. But as always with Johnston Press, sound management and rigorous cost control have justifiably given it a premium rating.

The Emap deal provided Johnston with the opportunity to sell off non-core assets and the company yesterday hinted at the imminent sale of bookbinding and library book selling businesses. Together they could raise £10m although this would be unlikely to result in a profit over their book value.

The economic recovery has played its part in the latest good figures, despite the interest rate hikes. Johnston disclosed advertising revenues up 7.7 per cent, beating most forecasts, with recruitment advertising soaring by 24.3 per cent in a buoyant jobs market.

The other good news came from newsprint costs, which the company predicted would stay at similar levels next year. Previously, they had forecast increases of up to 8 per cent. Lower newsprint costs saved the company £2m alone in the first half of 1997.

The improving outlook should raise full-year profits to £37m, compared with £24.1m last year and previous forecasts of £34m. Yesterday's one-third increase in the interim dividend, to 1p, should also be a good guide to the full year. The shares are still attractive as a long-term bet, though as a short-term opportunity they are starting to look fully valued.

Crash wipes £80m off Molins' value

Magnus Grimond

Molins the cigarette to teabag making equipment group, saw its shares crash 22.75p to 360p yesterday after it issued its fourth profit warning of the year.

The company, which has already been hit by accounting irregularities stretching back 10 years at a US business, was forced to admit yesterday that it had been over-optimistic about the second half of the current year, which was now on course for "substantially" lower operating profits.

Peter Harrison, chief executive, said Molins had been looking for results broadly comparable with the second half of 1996. However, shipments of tobacco machinery to the Far East had been affected by delays in receiving letters of credit, resulting in sales in the first half coming in £5m lower than expected.

The latest dismal news from Molins came as the group revealed a slump into a £7.7m loss in the six months to June, against profits of £13.6m before. The figures included a £13.4m exceptional loss at Langston, the US business hit by the ac-

counting problems, which the group announced in its last warning in July. The figure includes a total of £12.2m for overstated profits and investigation costs of £1.2m. Mr Harrison refused to say whether KPMG, the group's auditors, would be sued over the issue.

"We are going to review with them all the circumstances of the Langston irregularities," he said, but would not forecast the outcome.

He also refused to rule out further exceptional charges, but said order intake at Langston had improved over the past few months.

Molins' figures were also hit by a £1.5m rationalisation charge to reduce costs in the Brazilian operation, which moved into loss in the period.

Excluding exceptional items, pre-tax profits more than halved from £15.6m to £7.3m, on sales cut from £1.47m to £1.25m. The group blamed the strength of the pound for eroding its competitive position at a time when demand in some of its markets had slowed down. The interim dividend is held at 6.5p.

Amey amasses £100m war chest for acquisition spree

Andrew Yates

a large PFI contract to build a hospital in Birmingham. The deal could herald a flood of new hospital contract awards. The Government is redrafting the rules on PFI hospital contracts, designed to reduce the risks faced by the private sector in the event of a hospital trust falling into financial difficulties.

The new rules should be implemented shortly, leading to the award of more than 25 projects to the construction industry. "The PFI is here to stay and there are many more projects in the pipeline," Mr Ashley said.

Amey has recently won a deal to build the Croydon Tramlink and a contract to build an extension of the M6 near Carlisle. It is also bidding for £400m of track renewal and signalling work from Railtrack, which has embarked on a £10bn pro-

gramme to upgrade Britain's ageing rail system.

The acquisition spree could transform Amey, which has seen its share price almost quadruple to 45.5p since the start of last year after it acquired a construction business from British Rail. Amey already has up to £25.7m in the bank. The group said it would be comfortable with gearing at around 50 per cent, which would mean it would have at least another £70m to spend on acquisitions.

"Facilities management work now accounts for three quarters of our business and we are in talks about a number of opportunities," Mr Ashley said.

Amey announced a 70 per cent rise in pre-tax profit to £6.1m (£3.57m) on turnover up 29 per cent to £192m for the six months to June.

Jacques Vert warns loss will rise to £9m

Andrew Yates

included splitting its retail and wholesale business and selling its Tyne & Wear factory.

It is also developing a joint venture with Littlewoods, which recently bought a sizeable stake in the group, to publish an upmarket ladieswear catalogue.

However, Jacques Vert admitted it would be forced to record a big stock write-down after discovering problems during its annual stock count.

It is another blow to the clothes retailer which has been beset by problems over the past few years. Jacques Vert warned in May that disappointing wholesale orders and the decision by House of Fraser, the department store group, to terminate concessions at all 32 of its outlets would plunge the group into the red. House of Fraser dumped the group to concentrate on younger lines after disappointing sales of Jacques Vert ranges in its stores.

The latest profit warning coincided with the resignation of the finance director, Phillip Ashworth.

Jacques Vert's problems stem from a move into the casual market. The group announced plans earlier this year to attempt to halt its alarming slide. These

prospects for German industry are looking brighter according to figures yesterday showing a 3.5 per cent rise in output in July, to a level 5.9 per cent higher than a year earlier. All categories of manufacturing output picked up during the month, but the advance was far stronger in the heavy industry categories and construction than in consumer goods. Economists said this confirmed that exports rather than home demand were driving the recovery.

M&S to open store in Frankfurt

Marks & Spencer will open a store in Frankfurt, western Germany, in autumn 1999. The shop will be on Frankfurt's main shopping street, the Zeil, at a site occupied currently by retailer Ott and Heinemann.

Key investors reject Casino offer

Jean-Charles Naouri and Antoine Guichard, key shareholders of the French supermarket group Casino, said yesterday that they would reject a takeover offer from rival Promodes no matter what price they were offered. Casino also announced first half profits up 39 per cent, which analysts suggested might force Promodes to increase its £28m hostile offer, unveiled on Monday. "I completely and totally reject the tender offer whatever the price," Mr Guichard said yesterday.

Wedgwood profits up as US sales climb

Waterford Wedgwood's pre-tax profit rose 11.5 per cent in the first half of the year, in line with expectations, as sales in the US climbed. The Irish maker of crystal and china said profit for the six months to June increased to £8.7m, or £1.2p per share, from £7.8m, or £1.08p per share, a year earlier.

Danka to cut jobs in global revamp

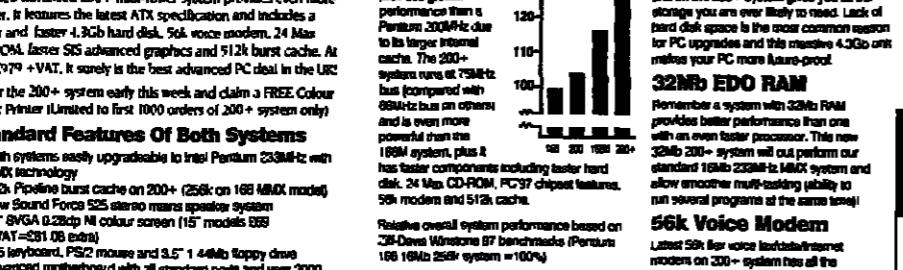
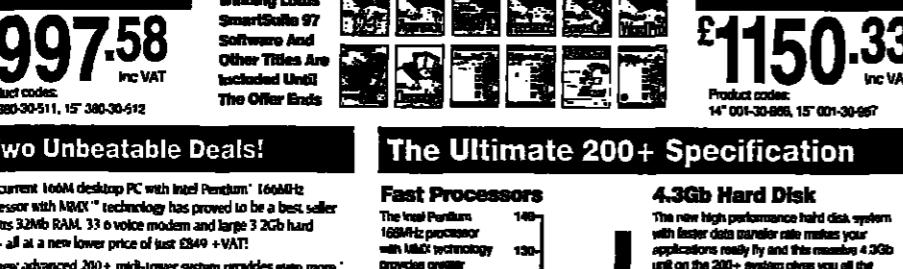
Danka Business Systems, the distributor of office equipment, is cutting 3 per cent of its 20,000-strong workforce as part of a global restructuring. London-based Danka is integrating its office products, office imaging and outsourcing units faster than expected. Most of the cuts are expected to be made in the US.

Company Results

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
American Port Serv (I)	17.7m (6.6m)	2.8m (1.58m)	5.4p (5.2p)	0.72p (0.64p)
Askey (I)	16.2m (1.49m)	0.86m (1.57m)	12.1p (7.4p)	4.0p (3.0p)
James Beattie (I)	4.5m (1.17m)	2.2m (1.6m)	3.6p (2.8p)	2.5p (1.75p)
Shireland International (I)	13.1m (2.3m)	7.000 (1.294m)	0.029 (1.42p)	n/a
Horizon (I)	— (I)	7.52m (7.51m)	1.44p (1.08p)	1.05p (0.95p)
Capital Corp (I)	33.2m (28.2m)	6.84m (7.24m)	4.36p (4.78p)	2.125p (2.125p)
Exxon Mobil (I)	44.8m (45.4m)	8.11m (3.3m)	17.1p (15.2p)	5.5p (5.5p)
Fluor (I)	2.3m (2.1m)	— (154.443)	— (—)	n/a
Hilco International (I)	13.0m (13.5m)	4.3m (1.6m)	2.0p (0.6p)	n/a
Medis (I)	125.4m (147.2m)	7.7m (13.8m)	6.5p (6.5p)	10.2p (29.8p)
Pagwest (I)	5.5m (3.7m)	810,000 (511,000)	12.8p (6.5p)	3.5p (2.0p)
Mineral Resources (I)	6.63m (6.79m)	— (99,000)	— (24,000)	— (—)
Witco (Cambridge) (I)	119.2m (124.2m)	10.37m (9.04m)	3.5p (2.7p)	1.5p (1.36p)
Regal Hotel (I)	41.3m (21.5m)	4.41m (2.21m)	1.04p (0.65p)	0.4p (0.325p)
Jefferson Smurfit (I)	18.2m (18.1m)	9.81m (8.126m)	4.0p (3.2p)	1.65p
Johnson Price (I)	110.6m (85.7m)	19.36m (12.6m)	0.46p (0.31p)	1.0p (0.75p)
Pantech (I)	357.2m (412.8m)	7.1m (11.5m)	0.525p (1.01p)	1.47p (1.4p)
Waterford Wedgwood (I)	104.6m (101.7m)	10.12m (9.5m)	1.2p (1.08p)	0.35p (0.30p)

(I) - Pre (I) - Interim (II) - Nine months

Home Office 2



The Captain Kirk approach to rethinking the welfare state



Diane Coyle

Reformers do not have to opt for one horn or another of an inescapable dilemma. Erase the horns and draw something different, is the message of these radical proposals

The holidays over, members of the Government's multifarious taskforces are opening their notebooks and sharpening their pencils in preparation for re-drawing the welfare state. Their brief: reduce unemployment; diminish inequality; increase security and social cohesion; and improve the quality and efficiency of public services, without adding one iota to government spending plans. Shun on anybody who has ever accused New Labour of a poverty of ambition in its policies.

The literature on welfare reform and all the ills it needs to tackle is immense. The taskforces could spend years simply reading up on the evidence if they wanted to. Luckily, there are some attempts to cut through the undergrowth.

As far as welfare goes, the fundamental problem seems to be the deteriorating trade-off between economic efficiency - boosting jobs and growth - and fairness. Whatever the cause - whether globalisation or the breakdown of traditional family morality - the policy choices seem to be increasingly unpalatable.

Star Trek fans will recall that in the third film featuring the crew of the Starship Enterprise, we flashback to the young Captain Kirk's brilliant solution to a test faced by all trainee Star Fleet commanders. The trainees are put through a disaster simulation in which, unknown to them, any course of action they choose will result in death and dishonour. For it is designed as a test of character rather than a test of their problem-solving skills.

Kirk, aided by the intelligence of Mr Spock, becomes the first person to avoid the disaster. He does it by reprogramming the computer software running the simulation in order to create the possibility of a solution - by stepping outside the apparent boundaries of the problem.

Two recent analyses of the welfare state attempt to alter its forbidding architecture in an equally dramatic way, casting, I suppose, Gordon Brown as Kirk and Frank

Field as his Spock. One, a research paper by two economists at Birkbeck College, London, argues that the fundamental welfare dilemma - economic efficiency versus equality - is actually the system we have. For example, when an unemployed person gets a job, she loses benefits and pays taxes.

The dilemma is that if unemployment benefits were lower, there would be less disincentive for the unemployed to find work - but people without jobs would be poorer and society more unequal and unfair. However, the two authors, Michael Orszag and Dennis Snower, suggest that the dilemma

arises because of the institutional structure of the welfare state.

They propose a radically different welfare system which separates the provision of services needed by individuals at various stages in their lives, whether unemployment support, education or a pension, from the welfare state's redistribution of income from rich to poor. Welfare services can be provided by public, voluntary or private sector. With enough regulation, private insurance could meet most of our needs. But the state plays an essential part in income redistribution.

What the paper proposes is a series of four individual accounts, covering education, health, unemployment and retirement. Everybody would be required to pay in a minimum to each and draw out a maximum. Their accounts would be a tax-advantaged and fully portable form of saving. Eventually the four types of account would form a fully funded social security system which did not require any subsidy from the general government budget.

Economic efficiency would be improved because of individuals' ownership of their funds: the more health care they "bought", the lower their balance would be. The unemployed would face no disincentive to finding work - quite the contrary. In addition, private providers would pep up the public services by offering them competition.

The proposed income redistribution would involve some inefficiency, but less than at present. Required contributions into each account would rise in line with income. Suppose somebody was jobless for long enough that they ran down the balance in their unemployment account. The government would pay into their account a transfer financed by the unused balances of the employed. When they found work, the transfer would continue just as long as their account remained below a minimum level. Only after that point would they pay in contributions themselves.

A second radical reprogramming of the welfare system is contained in a book published in the US earlier this year.^{**} Michael Mandel, the author, sees an injection of market principles as the way to reconcile efficiency and fairness. He proposes establishing futures markets in incomes, like the financial futures that trade on the level of the stock market in years to come, so that people are able to diversify their risk from investing in particular forms of "human capital", or, in other words, developing the skills and experience to do one particular kind of job.

The thinking is that people need ways of diversifying their risk of unemployment and loss of income in just the same way as investors need to diversify in order not to have all their eggs in one basket. Therefore what's needed is a type of investment based on the earnings from different sorts of jobs. There would be doctor futures, teacher futures, footballer futures and so on, which would deliver a return based on the earnings of those different categories of people. So if I work in a well-paid but insecure job, I could buy an asset that would give me income linked to a lower-paid but steadier job. Likewise, somebody else could invest in a higher but riskier stream of income.

The thing about radical proposals is that they always sound rather fanciful. Both of these interesting ideas would have a hard time making it to the serious policy agenda facing the Chancellor's taskforces. But, although they differ enormously in detail, they share the notion that welfare reformers do not have to opt for one horn or another of an inescapable dilemma. Erase the horns and draw something different, is their message.

* "Expanding the Welfare System" by Michael Orszag and Dennis Snower, Centre for Economic Policy Research working paper 1674, July 1997.
** "The High Risk Society" by Michael Mandel, Times Books, New York.

Craven would hardly have agreed to become chairman of Lourho after years as a director of Morgan Grenfell and Deutsche Bank unless he was going there specifically to utilise his South African contacts with Anglo.

Tiny hasn't lost his gift for invective. He describes Anglo as "that elephant in South Africa's living room". The recent sale by Lourho of the Metropole hotels to Stakis is blasted as "jam for Stakis shareholders and vinegar for Lourho shareholders". I wonder what the Albanians make of him.

Former British Lion scrums down with the Lloyd's team

PEOPLE & BUSINESS



John Young: Skill in rucks and mauls should come in useful

Former England rugby hero and ex-SIB chief executive John Young will henceforth be scrumming down as chairman of Lloyd's Regulatory Board (LRB), the body that regulates the Lime Street insurance market.

Mr Young will be building on the work of Sir Alan Hardcastle, who chaired the LRB since its launch in 1992. Mr Young will need all his wits about him as Lloyd's comes to terms with the new super-SIB or NewRO that is about to take over all investment regulation.

NewRO is set to take over the DTT's responsibility for regulating all forms of insurance business, while the LRB will continue its role as the policeman for the Lloyd's market.

Now 60, Mr Young enjoyed a successful rugby career with England and the British Lions in the 1960s, as well as winning the national 100 yards sprint championship and a rugger double blut at Oxford.

He's mostly been a stockbroker since then, although his skills in rucks and mauls will probably be more useful in the regulatory upheavals to come.

My old chum Tiny Rowland just doesn't stop. Yesterday he spoke to me by satellite phone from his yacht moored off the coast of Albania, where he has just completed another mega-deal.

The former head of Lourho was coy about the exact nature of the business, saying only that it involved "some parties inside Albania and some outside".

It was a big deal, though. "I've made more money out of it than I did out of Lourho in my last three years there. I'm enjoying myself," he trills.

He certainly is. The evergreen tycoon has just fired off another of his famous circulars to Lourho shareholders, this time attacking the proposed merger with South African mining group JCI.

Tiny is convinced that "JCI are acting as stooges for Anglo American, who have always wanted to get their hands on Lourho's most valuable asset - the Asanti gold mine".

He points out that John

Craven would hardly have agreed to become chairman of Lourho after years as a director of Morgan Grenfell and Deutsche Bank unless he was going there specifically to utilise his South African contacts with Anglo.

Tiny hasn't lost his gift for invective. He describes Anglo as "that elephant in South Africa's living room". The recent sale by Lourho of the Metropole hotels to Stakis is blasted as "jam for Stakis shareholders and vinegar for Lourho shareholders". I wonder what the Albanians make of him.

Builder Wilson Connolly has appointed a brace of non-executive directors - John Tutte, a civil engineer who is currently managing director of Wilcon Homes Eastern and John Weir, a qualified architect who is currently managing director of Wilcon Homes Midlands.

I see the story about Tim Smith, the former Tory minister being charged by the Institute of Chartered Accountants for "bringing the profession into disrepute" is the front-page splash for today's issue of *Accountancy Age*, the bean counters' weekly read.

How fitting. Mr Smith wrote a column for the *Age* about accountancy issues for what seemed like eons, although his musings have been less regular since the matter of Mr Fayed's payments to him came up.

It's a hard, unforgiving world, accountancy.

John Willcock

He spent 25 years in industry

Industrial Metals

London Metal Exchange

Settlement Conversion

Settlement

Stocks & change in

tonnes at 12 Sep

Settlement Conversion

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Stocks & change in

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Settlement Conversion

Bookmakers will shut due to public pressure

Racing

RICHARD EDMONDSON

Britain's leading bookmakers decided yesterday that their period of Saturday mourning will, after all, last all day.

Coral, Ladbrokes and William Hill – the last-named typified the Big Three's response when they initially argued that they owed it to customers to bet on Irish racing and British dogs just after Diana, Princess of Wales is buried – have bowed to their

god of market forces and will now shut up shop. The canine meetings at Crayford and Romford have been abandoned.

"We have carefully considered customer and staff feedback throughout the week on whether or not to close our shops this Saturday," Christopher Bell, the Ladbrokes managing director, said yesterday.

"Our decision has been strongly influenced by the feelings of both customers and staff at this time of national mourning." There was no mention though of the strong influence

that had prompted the decision to open the shops in the first place.

William Hill will pay their staff despite a rare Saturday off, but there will be no chance for their workers to spend the money on a trade newspaper. Both *The Sporting Life* and *Racing Post* will not be published on the day of the funeral.

Looking further ahead, there is continuity for the future of the Grand National, following yesterday's announcement that Martell, the Cognac house, is to extend its sponsorship of the day of the funeral.

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Dr Johnson injured

Dr Johnson, a leading hope for the St Leger a week on Saturday, will miss the race after injuring himself, the colt's trainer Charles O'Brien said yesterday.

The chestnut, successful in four of his six starts this term, was an 11-2 chance in William Hill's betting on the strength of

his win at Leopardstown last month. His absence has prompted William Hill to shorten the prices of their market leaders for the race. Silver Patriarch and Stowaway, to 5-2 from 11-4, with Andre Fabre's Vertical Speed, who began the day at 11-2, now a 7-2 chance.

DR ADVENTURE (10) – for side; 7t – stands side; rest inside.

DRAW ADVANTAGE (10) – for side; 7t – stands side; rest inside.

HYPERION (10) – L-shaped course. Flat and ideal for the powerful galloper.

2.10 Penrose (4.0) Noble Demand

4.10 Present Chance

3.10 Winter Romance (nap) 5.10 Shadadard

3.40 Darapour

GODS SONG (10) – 5f off – for side; 7t – stands side; rest inside.

DARAPOUR (10) – L-shaped course. Flat and ideal for the powerful galloper.

2.11 Course 1m 5f on city at 1000m. York station 1m. ADMISSION: County Stand 5.15 (16-25 years-olds 5.15); Tattersalls 5.10; Silver Ring 5.6; OAPS 5.25; Course Enclosure 5.8 (OAPS 5.15). Under-16s free all inclusive. CARE: PARC 5.2, remainder free.

LEADING TRAINERS: H. Codd – 37 winners from 109 runners gives a success ratio of 24.5% of 200 starts from 1st Jan '97 to 19th June '98; a runner from 2nd (18.6%); J. D'Alton 18 from 19 (9.5%).

LEADING JOCKEYS: L. D'Alton 48 wins from 109 starts gives a success ratio of 21.2%; P. Eddery 37 from 222 (16.7%); R. Reid 25 from 172 (11.6%); W. B. Bawden 19 from 189 (14.4%).

FAVOURITES: 207 wins in 578 races (35%).

QUOTED RATES: 100/1 (10) – 16-1 (10); 100/1 (10) – 16-1 (10); 100/1 (10) – 16-1 (10).

WINNERS IN LAST SEVEN DATES: B. Codd (5.10) won at Chester on Friday.

LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Deeply True (2.40) & Joss Hulley (5.10) have been sent 261 miles by G. Moore from Woodington, E. Sussex.

2.10 YORKSHIRE-TYME TEES TELEVISION MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £25,000 added 2YO in Penney Value 5.6/2.2

1. 050 ALLIANCE (10) (H. S. L. M. O'Brien) 0.00s 9.0 – R. Wards 5.9

2. 042 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

3. 043 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – M. Roberts 6

4. 044 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – W. Ryan 5

5. 045 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

6. 046 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – M. Roberts 6

7. 047 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

8. 048 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – M. Roberts 6

9. 049 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

10. 050 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

11. 051 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

12. 052 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

13. 053 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

14. 054 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

15. 055 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

16. 056 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

17. 057 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

18. 058 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

19. 059 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

20. 060 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

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22. 062 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

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24. 064 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

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44. 084 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

45. 085 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

46. 086 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

47. 087 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

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51. 091 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

52. 092 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

53. 093 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

54. 094 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

55. 095 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

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57. 097 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

58. 098 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

59. 099 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

60. 100 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

61. 101 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

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63. 103 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

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66. 106 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

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68. 108 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

69. 109 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

70. 110 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

71. 111 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

72. 112 ALBURNUS (10) (R. P. French) 0.00s 9.0 – K. Dwyer 5

Ripley revels in surprise recall

Stuart Ripley had spent his whole career dreaming of an England call-up – but when it came the experience was an anti-climax.

Ripley's England debut came in Graham Taylor's last match, against San Marino in November 1993. Yesterday, after his first day's training with the international squad since that night, he recalled: "You can't pick and choose when you get called up by England – it is a great honour – but, had I been able to, I would not have chosen that game."

"Someone said 'it must have felt like being the last man on the Titanic' and that summed it up. Graham Taylor was taking a lot of stick and all the players were being tarnished with the same brush. They were terrified of playing."

"I couldn't believe the negative vibes. It was a difficult environment to come into, they were absolutely rock-bottom. Confidence is everything in a football, it affects any player."

The most talented player in the world won't show that ability if he lacks confidence, I've seen it happen to players with immense talent."

"The difference between then and now is tremendous. The atmosphere is bubbling. I could see it on television. Players are trying things which they only do if they have confidence, things that are not obvious."

Glenn Moore
on the return of a 'forgotten' winger to the England fold

You need to do that at international level."

Ripley speaks from personal experience. After Taylor left, Terry Venables never showed an interest and, he admits, he was not playing well enough to deserve a second cap. Poor form was followed by injury, which put him out of most of last season. When he returned, Blackburn Rovers had dispensed with wingers and he could not get back in the side. This year, however, their new manager, Roy Hodgson, has played Ripley and Jason Wilcox on the flanks and Rovers have responded with 15 goals in five games to lead the table.

"It is not the same as the championship side," he added. "The full-backs are playing further forward so Jason and I are pushed on and get more one-on-ones, which is our forte. In the championship year we were expected to do a lot more chasing back and defending and, while I was happy to do it, as it helped the team, as a winger you want to attack."

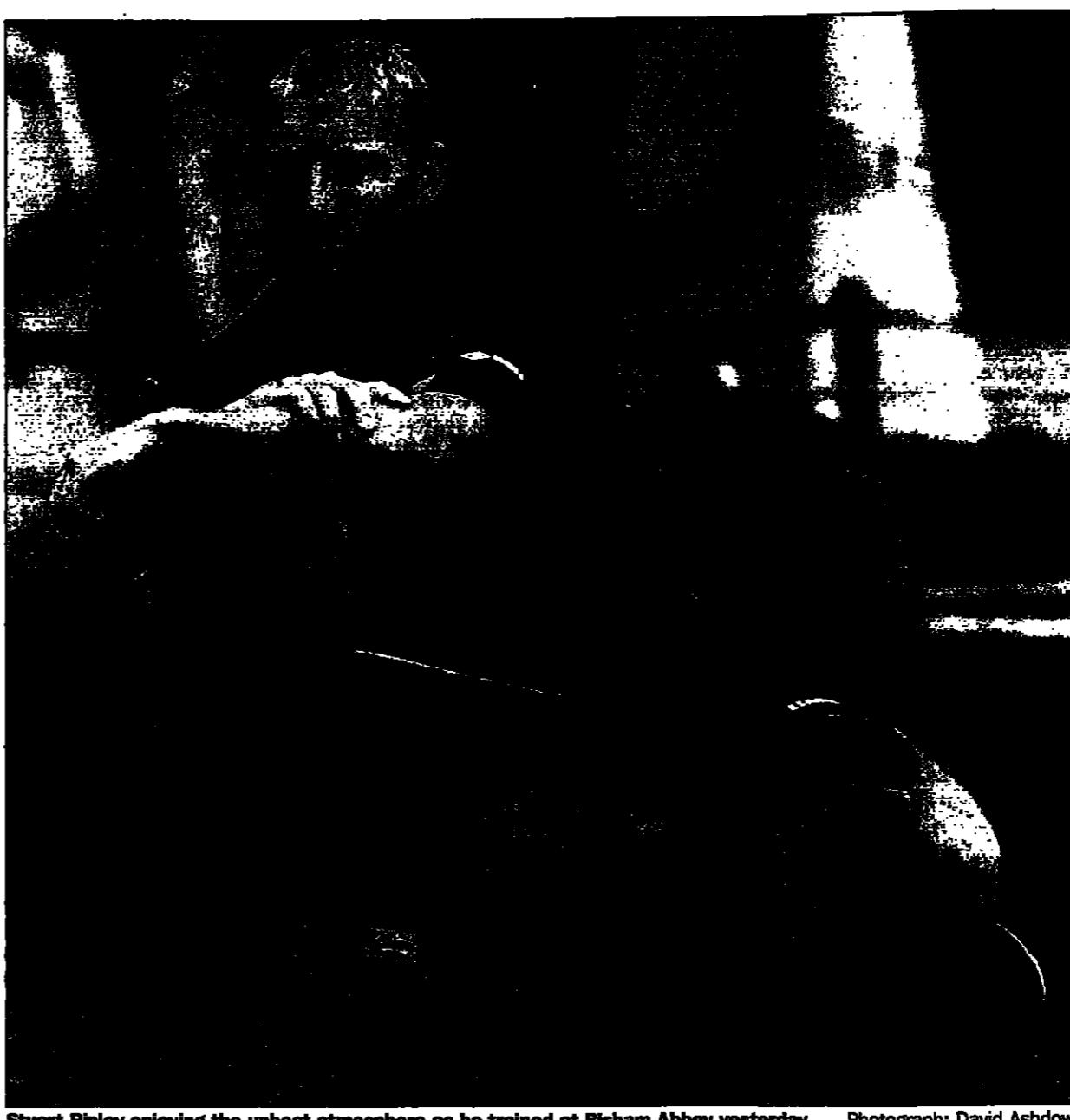
"I am now fitter than I've ever been and playing as well as I have ever done. I feel I have got past anyone when it comes to the World Cup next summer."

Glenn Hoddle agreed and said: "He is back to his best and in a very positive frame of mind. He has looked as good as anyone has joining in with us for the first time. He might suit our situation next week."

However, despite this testimony, Ripley admitted: "I was still a bit surprised to be called up after being out of the game so long. For the last 18 months I've either been injured, playing with injuries or been coming back from them."

"I never despaired. Players get injured, it is part of the job. It is difficult but you have to cope with it. I worked very hard in the gym and with the physio. You also have to cope with not getting the weekly highs and lows. You see the lads getting hyped up for matches and you can't. When you are injured you don't get that adrenaline rush on a matchday. I think that is one of the hardest things people have to cope with when they retire."

As his comments suggest, Ripley is a thoughtful player and, although Hoddle generally has little time for "specialist wingers", as Ripley regards himself, he is considering a different approach to break down Moldova. Ripley may thus have the chance to show that, should England qualify, he has more than just a French A level to offer when it comes to the World Cup next summer.



Stuart Ripley enjoying the upbeat atmosphere as he trained at Bisham Abbey yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

McCarthy laments injury toll

Niall Quinn, Ray Houghton, David Kelly, Curtis Fleming and Keith O'Neill all withdrawn with injuries from the Republic of Ireland squad for the vital Group Eight qualifiers in Iceland on Saturday and Lithuania next Wednesday.

The news did not get any better yesterday for the Irish manager, Mick McCarthy, after an x-ray on the Norwich striker O'Neill revealed a cracked bone in his foot.

McCarthy said: "Keith has got to be one of the unluckiest players around with injuries. If you see him signing autographs and hear a crack then, with his luck, it is more likely to be his finger than the pencil."

Quinn, who made his international comeback after a year out when Ireland were held to a home goalless draw by Lithuania two weeks ago, has had more trouble with the knee injury that has dogged his career.

The Reading player-coach Houghton, a veteran of some of the Republic's finest successes, had to miss his club's game

against Queen's Park Rangers on Tuesday night and confirmed his withdrawal yesterday.

Fleming in Dublin yesterday to return to Middlesbrough, after failing a fitness test on a groin injury, and Kelly, who withdrew on Tuesday, has had a cartilage operation. McCarthy would have turned to the Boro forward Alan Moore as a replacement, but he too is injured.

The Irish squad, due to trav-

el to Reykjavik early this morning, is now reduced to 19 players, even if O'Neill, who has missed four of the last five World Cup qualifiers with injury, makes the trip.

McCarthy's side need maximum points from both games to keep alive their chances of finishing runners-up in the group and qualifying for a two-leg play-off against one of the other group's second-placed teams.

He said: "If any of the play-

ers leave behind when we go to Iceland suddenly make a dramatic improvement in their fitness, it is possible I could ask them to fly out and join us in Lithuania after the weekend."

The squad now looks very skinny and although we are well loaded with defenders, I won't have too many options in other positions. But we just have to go out there with the players we've got, and I still believe we have enough ability to win both matches."

Another worry for McCarthy, though, is that nine of his remaining players – including the captain Andy Townsend and midfielders Roy Keane – are on yellow cards. They will be automatically banned from Wednesday's match in Vilnius if booked again against Iceland.

McCarthy has already promoted the West Bromwich Albion winger Kevin Kilbane from the Under-21 squad to the senior party and may have to call on further recruits from the younger players if there are more injuries or suspensions.

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Dick Knight, the new Brighton chairman, has made clear the board's determination to bring the Seagulls back close to their former Goldstone Ground, after finally taking control of the club.

News that the ownership deal has gone through has come as a huge relief for supporters of the club, and Knight admits that the new board have "their hands full" following the two most traumatic years in Brighton's history.

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Bellotti from Brighton and promised new cash for players, has a 49.5 per cent shareholding in the Third Division club.

Bellotti, the former Liberal Democrat MP for Eastbourne, has been with Brighton for nearly four years and was subjected to a hate campaign during Albion's last seasons at the Goldstone Ground when they nearly went out of business.

However, Knight is now looking to the future, and as well as long-term plans he is intent on stepping up the search for a new temporary ground rather than continuing to use Gillingham's Priestfield Stadium, which involves a 15-mile trip to watch "home" games.

Earlier this summer Albion submitted plans for a huge £25m sports and leisure complex at Waterhall, on the outskirts of Brighton.

Knight added: "The issue here is, does the community of Sussex want a superb modern sports stadium to house not only its Football League club but also a whole range of other sports

facilities, which is our vision for this stadium for the future?"

The scheme has been attacked by environmentalists, who say it will ruin an area of outstanding natural beauty, and Knight stressed: "Our main priority was to gain control of the club. The issue of Waterhall will certainly be addressed, and we will explore all the options open to us in the Brighton area for a suitable sports stadium."

"I am going to try and get away from Gillingham as soon as possible. We are going to have our hands full, but I'm sure everyone is as relieved as I am that the long ownership saga is now over. We are delighted we're now in a position from which we can all consider it. But Thursday is definitely out. We have a match against Derby on the Saturday and another game at Liverpool the following Monday."

Tranmere have signed Dirk Hebel, a 24-year-old German midfielder, on a free transfer from the Turkish club Bursaspor. He has agreed a two-year contract with the First Division club.

Knight takes control

Peacock held back

Darren Peacock, Newcastle's player of the year, has had his return to the first-team squad put on hold.

The centre-half has fully recovered from two summer groin operations which kept him out of the club's pre-season preparations as well as their early season matches. But he had to put off a possible return on Wednesday night for the reserves at Doncaster because of a troublesome knee.

He said: "If any of the play-

ers leave behind when we go to Iceland suddenly make a dramatic improvement in their fitness, it is possible I could ask them to fly out and join us in Lithuania after the weekend."

The 29-year-old is not unduly worried by his latest setback and expects to be back in action next week, when the reserves travel to Scarborough.

Peacock said: "It is frustrating rather than particularly worrying." An operation on his right knee a week after the end of last season – to fix wear and tear – is now causing him some discomfort. "We feel it is better to see the specialist and have it checked over," he added.

The club have decided that the club will go to play in future. "The clubs agreed to draw a line under the past."

But it must be a concern for

Lindsay that, even if the source of the story was what he called "mischievous" it appeared yesterday, of all days, in a paper owned by News Corporation, which has an £875m investment in the game.

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Council imposes salary cap and grills Lindsay

Rugby League

DAVE HADFIELD

£100,000, were all above board. "I was very disappointed that someone was trying to take something completely out of context," Lindsay said of the accusations of extravagance.

"I was happy to assure Council that during that period I was flying back and forward to Australia and I make no apology for it. The figure of £100,000 is quoted, but that includes £30,000 for a new Jaguar. I like travelling in a Jaguar and I don't think the chief executive of the Rugby Football League should catch the 33 bus."

Lindsay also referred to a figure of £800 quoted for the hire of videos at his London hotel. "I don't know what they re-

fer to, but if I stop in and watch a film it is probably cheaper than going out for a drink in London."

The chairman of the League, Sir Rodney Walker, said: "The clubs agreed to draw a line under the past."

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Other decisions included the adoption of a new structure for the board of directors to include a full-time financial director, two non-executive directors – the name of Richard Branson has already been muted – and representatives elected by the First and Second Division clubs and Super League.

Existing clubs have accepted the principle of bringing new clubs from outside traditional rugby league areas into Super League before the end of the current News Corporation contract in three years' time. In 1999 all existing clubs will, in effect, have to apply for their

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Niyongabo takes the spotlight

Athletics

MIKE ROWBOTTOM

World record attempts by Daniel Komen – and his coach, Moses Kiptanui – ended unsuccessfully in Rieti last night. Instead, it was another African, Burundi's Olympic 5,000 metres champion Venuste Niyongabo, who produced the result of the night, running the third-fastest 2,000 metres ever in 4min 49sec.

It was the year's fastest time and just 1.12 seconds outside the record set by Noureddine Morceli in 1995 in Paris.

Niyongabo, who has run the second-fastest 2,000 in 4min 46.69, missed the World Champion-

ships in Athens last month with a stomach muscle injury.

The track in Rieti, a small town nestled in the mountains 35 miles north-east of Rome, has seen three records fall in the past five years, including the 3,000m mark Komen set last year.

Like Niyongabo, Komen was aiming at a record owned by Morceli: the 3:44.39 run by the Algerian at Rieti in 1993.

Morceli set the mile and 1500m standards on this track in 1992 and 1993 during his heyday as the world's premier mid-distance runner. He finished first in last night's 1500m, in 3:31.60, well outside his best-ever 3:27.37.

Kiptanui, the first man to

break eight minutes in the 3,000m steeplechase and hoping to reclaim his record in the event, was within striking distance of the mark two-thirds of the way through but could not maintain the pace and clocked 8min 00.54sec.

He was nearly five seconds outside the record set by fellow countryman Bernard Barmasai 10 days ago.

"The pace was too fast for the first two kilometres," Kiptanui said. "I am a little bit disappointed, but I was a little bit too tired."

Komen, who won the world 5,000m world title and then broke the distance record on 22 August, also looked weary as he finished in 3:47.85.

England victory maintains momentum

Hockey

England continued in fine form in the Women's Junior World Cup in the Olympic Stadium in Seongnam, South Korea, with a workmanlike 4-0 win against Canada following up their 6-0 victory against Spain on the opening day, writes Bill Colwill.

England were kept waiting

for their opening goal by a brilliant display of goalkeeping by Ann Marotra until the half hour, when the substitute, Kerri Moore opened the door.

Three minutes later her Olton colleague, Jennie Birsmore, gave England a 2-0 interval lead.

Goals from Melanie Clewlow and Sally Wright inside 15

Meaning of tragedy
Ken Jones puts sporting
setbacks in perspective, page 26

sport

Race for the title
County Championship
reports, page 26

Hoddle sends signals to younger generation

Football

GLENN MOORE
reports from Bisham Abbey

Bisham Abbey seemed an appropriate place for England to be training yesterday, with one member of the party doing penance and the rest having remembrance at the back of their minds.

While Rio Ferdinand joined

a squad preparing for a match he has been excluded from, Glenn Hoddle, the coach, spoke of the difficulties of preparing a team for a World Cup qualifier at a time when the country is in a state of mourning.

Hoddle's team meet Moldova at Wembley next Wednesday, four days after the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales, and Hoddle said: "It will be a difficult, emotional evening. It is an

opportunity to lift the nation at that stage. The three points are, in many ways, secondary, such as the difficulties of preparing a team for a World Cup qualifier at a time when the country is in a state of mourning."

Hoddle reiterated that Ferdinand's exclusion for a drink-driving conviction would have occurred regardless of Diana's death in a car driven by an apparently drunk driver. "We

made the decision before that news came out," he said. "With an 18-year-old going to court on the day he was joining up with the squad, I had no option. If I hadn't, I wouldn't have slept well at night."

Ferdinand was arrested in the early hours of Monday morning. He had taken a taxi home to Peckham after a long drinking session on Saturday night but made the mistake of having

three further drinks over dinner with friends on the Sunday. They "topped up" the alcohol remaining in his blood.

"Though there was no publicity, we did the same with Jody Morris, withdrawing him from the Under-21s after a similar incident a few months ago," Hoddle said. "At that age we feel that is right: they need to learn that lesson. It is a signal to any young player."

"Ferdinand is here because I wanted him to see what he is missing out on. This being his first call-up it had all the more impact. We have had a long chat. He's very disappointed with what he's done. He feels he's let himself, his club and his family down. It has been a harsh lesson to learn. We don't want to crucify him - he hasn't shot anyone or robbed a granny - but he needs to learn. He's not

out for good. Harry [Redknapp, his manager at West Ham] and I will monitor his conduct. If he goes and does something else in a month's time, then there's a problem."

Ferdinand is also being counseled by Tony Adams, a "reformed" alcoholic and convicted drink-driver, who is with the squad though he will not be fit to play next week.

Hoddle added: "If you play for

England there is an expectation on and off the pitch. The situation with Paul Gascoigne [beating his wife] was different. He was not taken to court. I felt he needed help to overcome it and it would not be beneficial to anyone to chuck him out the squad."

Three players, Teddy Sheringham, David Batty and Sol Campbell, missed training to nurse various bruises and aches. All should be fit to play next week.

England

Agassi vows to keep on fighting

Tennis

JOHN ROBERTS
reports from New York

Among the unforced errors at the United States Open was an item in the media notes stating that Ilie Nastase, the former world No 1 from Romania, congratulated countrywoman Irina Spirlea after her victory over Monica Seles.

Perhaps this confusion was rooted in Ilie Nastase's *Some Like It Hot* cabaret routine with his former doubles partner, Ion Tiriac, in Monte Carlo. Whatever, it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep pace with the changing faces and identities in the sport these days.

The Americans in particular have reason to be perplexed in a week which has seen Pete Sampras lose his singles title, Andre Agassi fall short of filling the vacancy, and Michael Chang teeter close to leaving the nation without a man in the last eight for the first time in the open era.

Agassi's quest ended in the Arthur Ashe Stadium in the fourth round on Tuesday night. The Las Vegas' Pat Rafter too difficult to catch after losing the opening sets, having failed to convert either of two set points in the second set.

A spirited recovery from 1-4 to win the third set encouraged the crowd, and his opponent, to start bracing themselves for a marathon. But Rafter's stamina, attacking

flair, smartly angled shots and general superiority on the night and prevailed, 6-3, 7-6, 4-6, 6-3.

Rafter, the No 13 seed, now plays the unseeded Magnus Larsson, of Sweden, in the semi-finals. Agassi's next appearance in a tournament is open to speculation, although he insists he will return.

"I don't know what is on the agenda," he said. "but be assured that it will be in the best interest of my game plan to come back and play well next year. I am out there on the court again, making improvements, feeling good, enjoying myself and getting better."

Well aware that his ranking is bound to slip from an already dodgy No 63, Agassi shrugged off the idea that numbers would deter him. "It is clear that when my game is together I am not worried about much except the person I am playing against," he said. "ATP ranking is not something that I think much about, never have."

Some consolation for the Americans has been derived from the emergence on the women's side of Venus Williams. The 17-year-old Californian's recent endeavours to add a degree of strategy to her athleticism and shot-making has taken her to the singles semi-finals on her debut.

The American Pam Shriver, in 1978, was the last debutante to appear in the last four, advancing to the final, where she was defeated by Chris Evert. Shriver was the No 16 seed.



Venus Williams, of the United States, turns on the power to beat France's Sandrine Testud in the US Open quarter-finals

Photograph: Reuter

Williams, ranked No 66, is the first unseeded semi-finalist since Mima Jausovec, of former Yugoslavia, in 1976.

"It used to be that the other person forced the mistake," Williams said after her quarter-final victory against Sandrine Testud, of France. "I was not quite able to understand that I didn't have to go for winners, or I didn't have to always just expect to his a winner."

Williams credited her younger sister, Serena, for persuading her to vary her game for her third-round match against Germany's Anke

"Fortunately, I was able to understand this, and in a small amount of time. It takes a lot of players years, and it could have been four years later, when I was 21. I would still be pretty young, but it is a long time in tennis."

Williams' credit goes to her younger sister, Serena, for persuading her to vary her game for her third-round match against Germany's Anke

Huber, the No 8 seed. "I never before took too much pace off the ball," Venus said. "I think I just started doing it in practice automatically, mostly because Serena does it quite a lot."

"Serena will take the pace off the ball, and place it. I was not good at that. I kind of looked at her and learned it. It took me a while, because she just takes advantage of me taking the

pace off the ball. It just clicked. Some things happen like that."

After defeating Testud, 7-5, 7-5, Williams hauled herself far enough up the perimeter wall to kiss her mother, Oracene, and then collected the beads which had fallen from her braided hair during the course of play and distributed them among spectators.

"My goal coming in to the tournament was not to lose

one bead during a match, so I definitely didn't meet my goal," she joked. "I'm kind of upset about that. I am going to work harder in the next tournament." Beads of inspiration, beads of perspiration.

Spirlea, the No 11 seed, now stands between Williams and a place in the final. Maybe Ilie Nastase will make another cheer-leading appearance.

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Yeboah transfer stalled

TOMMY STANIFORTH

Tony Yeboah's proposed move from Leeds United to the German Bundesliga side Hamburg is unlikely to be concluded until early next week following "unexpected further developments" throughout yesterday.

Leeds and Hamburg have definitely agreed a fee of "around £1m" for the Ghanaian international, who has been in self-imposed exile from Elland Road since the end of last season. The 31-year-old striker is still to negotiate personal terms, although both Leeds and Yeboah's adviser are confident a deal can be struck.

Leeds' managing director, Jeremy Fenn, said: "There have been further unexpected developments today. Discussions have taken place, although they are still to be concluded on the playing side. We have agreed a fee, and I would hope everything can be finalised some time next week."

Yeboah's adviser, Hayden Evans, confirmed: "There are several issues still to be resolved and a lot of work yet to be done. If the deal does go through, and we are hopeful, I can not see it being any earlier than next week."

Leeds will be keeping their fingers crossed that a deal for Yeboah, who cost them £3.4m from Eintracht Frankfurt in January 1995, can be ironed out after the recent breakdown of the Swedish international Tomas Brolin's transfer to Real Zaragoza. Both players are out of favour at Elland Road following well-publicised rows with George Graham.

Yeboah has not played in the first team since throwing his shirt at the Leeds manager after being substituted during a defeat at Tottenham in mid-March. The fed-up forward then spent the rest of the season on the sidelines, before returning home to Ghana in the summer and deciding to boycott pre-season training. He recently turned down a move to Newell's Old Boys, of Argentina.

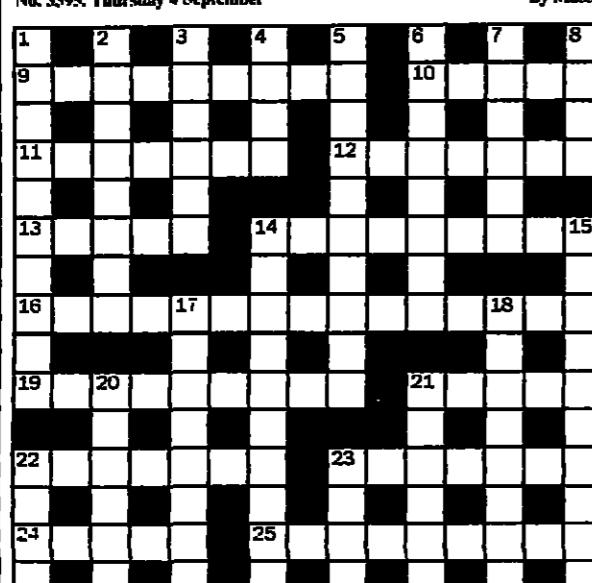
More football, page 27

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3395, Thursday 4 September

By Mass

Wednesday's solution



SEAFAIRING GRANITE
TIRANIA
OGHAM FRACTIONS
NEEDS
MANES SPRINGS CLEO
SPHINXES
MATCHES EXPRESS
GOLIATH
VICEROY SCRUFFY
EDDIE DRUMSTICKS
GUIDED DULL THIRST
OBSTINATE ACUTE
ESTER RERMAD
ROOKS MAYAPPLIES

ACROSS
9 Capital! (5)
10 Over produces a win (5)
11 100 on comparatively cheerful staff (7)
12 No church is in the money! (7)
13 May's one for the lights, around North (5)
14 One to spill the beans - twice (9)
16 Act of bravado involving one of the chambers? (7,8)
19 Scare had nervous fellow making for cover (9)
21 Following? Support's fading away (5)
22 Thin and pale outside hospital (7)
23 Puppet pact was arranged (4-3)
24 Narrow margin (5)

25 Out of sorts, referring to depression in a number (3-6)

DOWN
1 Brisk responses from the Left and the Right? (5,5)
2 Details of first-class properties, as reported (8)
3 Ghost possessing artist within (6)
4 Light wood one's carved (4)
5 Posting or dismissing? (7,3)
6 Level with everyone, the European - in line (8)
7 Weight includes long packet (6)
8 Name from incomplete record (4)
14 Youth's turned up to court, in smooth perfume (10)

Axed Martin points the finger at Ballesteros

Golf

ANDY FARRELL
reports from Crans-sur-Sierre

A night's sleep after learning of his exclusion from Europe's Ryder Cup team clearly did nothing for Miguel Angel Martin's disposition. At a news conference in Madrid announcing that his lawyer would appeal to the Ryder Cup Committee, Martin knew who to blame for his exclusion.

"The captain, Seve Ballesteros, is responsible for this," Martin said. In response to a question about whether he thought there was a plot to remove him and replace him with a better known player, he answered: "Yes."

Martin added: "The other players are with me. The only people who are against me are the Ryder Cup Committee and Seve Ballesteros." One of those players is believed to be Jose Maria Olazabal, the 11th man on the Cup qualifying list who has been handed Martin's place.

However, Ballesteros, here in Switzerland, where he will announce his two wild card selections after the first round of the European Masters today, denied he was involved in the decision. He said he was told of Martin's exclusion only on Tuesday night in a telephone call from Ken Schofield, the executive director of the PGA European Tour.

This contradicts a statement issued on Tuesday saying that the decision to drop Martin was taken "following close consultation between the Ryder Cup Committee and Seve Ballesteros".

"No, no, no, I was not there,"

Ballesteros reiterated. "I don't even have the official statement. It was up to the committee."

He added: "This is a team event, not an individual event. I am in a difficult position. The Ryder Cup is in Spain, I am Spanish, Miguel Angel Martin is Spanish and he is a good friend."

Martin called the instruction for him to play 18 holes at Valderrama yesterday to prove his fitness "sheer stupidity". He has not played since mid-July due to a wrist injury, but has been told he can resume chipping balls later this week. "They could wait until days before and name a replacement if I was not ready," he said.

"I think this is an economic problem, not personal. It's not the same having Miguel Angel Martin playing Tiger Woods as having Nick Faldo playing Tiger Woods." Martin's lawyer warned that if the appeal was unsuccessful, he would "go to the courts".

The Spaniard found support in his friend Ignacio Garrido, who will make his Ryder Cup debut at Valderrama. "If he takes this to law, he could stop the Ryder Cup being played," Garrido said. "You do not need to play golf to know if this decision is right. It's the most unfair decision I've ever heard of in golf history. If it had been Seve, or Monty, it would not have happened."

Qualifying for the Cup which starts at Valderrama on 26 September - it seems to have been going on for years - started 12 months ago at the British Masters at Collingtree Park, Northampton. The event became infamous for featuring the worst greens on the European

tour - until this week. The Crans-sur-Sierre course here, which doubles as nursery ski slopes in the winter, has suffered from record rainfall in the last two months and a greenkeeper mixing a wrong batch of fertiliser. All of which has left Nick Faldo a deeply unhappy golfer.

"There is no chance of hitting two puts the same," said Faldo, who is playing in Europe for the first time since the Open. "It is totally out of your control." Faldo, who should learn today of his selection as a wild card, is under contract, like Colin Montgomerie, to play here. One of the glamourous locations on tour, the tournament has been staged here since 1939.

"This is your preparation for the Ryder Cup and this is what you are given," Faldo, who abandoned Europe for the US tour three years ago, said.

"There is no chance of hitting two puts the same," said Faldo, who is playing in Europe for the first time since the Open. "It is totally out of your control." Faldo, who should learn today of his selection as a wild card, is under contract, like Colin Montgomerie, to play here. One of the glamourous locations on tour, the tournament has been staged here since 1939.

Temporary greens at the sixth and eighth holes will be used for the first two holes, and yesterday's pro-am, in which Ballesteros played with the Argentine president Carlos Menem, took place on the nine-hole short course across the road.

One more heavy downpour could put the tournament in doubt, but in any case it will be a week for admiring the spectacular views of the Alps rather than the putting surfaces.

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